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AN INTRODUCTION TO PASTORAL THEOLOGY

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PREFACE

THE writers of this book share the conviction that the traditional science and art of the pastoral care of individuals can be profitably combined with knowledge derived from modern scientific study of human nature. Moral and ascetic theology, as the text-books present it, enshrines the age-long experience and the tested wisdom of the Western Church in dealing with individual souls. It would be presumptuous and foolish to start from any other basis; and we have felt bound to reproduce large parts of the only systematic moral theology known to the Church. At the same time, we are agreed that it suffers from certain remediable defects. It is in many ways too formal and legal in spirit, and it suffers from over-definition and pedantry. Further, it needs to be wrought into a synthesis with the new knowledge of the workings of the human soul which recent scientific study has made available. Such a synthesis is not to be achieved in a single volume; but it is our hope that we have made some contribution towards it.

Our work is intended to help clergymen and ministers, and particularly the younger priests of the Anglican Communion, in what has tended to be a neglected part of their duties. Pastoral theology has been a recognised element in the studies preparatory to ordination; but it has been mainly concerned with such matters as parochial visitation, preaching, and the public ministrations of the clergy in church, and to groups of persons in classes, clubs and the like. The pastor's ministrations to the individual, his

exercise of the duties of the spiritual physician, have been left too much to the light of nature and common sense: qualifications admirable in themselves and always necessary, but inadequate for the delicate work of the physician of the soul. We are far from suggesting—and the title of the present volume must not be taken to imply—that the subjects generally included in pastoral theology ought not to be studied; but we here deliberately address ourselves to the consideration of certain duties, unquestionably belonging to the pastoral care of individuals, which are not infrequently left undone.

The book as a whole represents the common mind of four people. We have met on several occasions, in conferences lasting two or three days at a time, for criticism and revision of one another's contributions. It is inevitable that in a book written in this way, there should be occasional differences of emphasis and balance, and none of us wishes to be understood as giving unqualified approval to every word that his colleagues have written; but we offer our work as a corporate attempt to fulfil the principles laid down in the first paragraph of this Preface.

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PART I
THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF HOLINESS

THE pastoral and evangelistic office of the Christian priest is thus described in the Ordinal of the English Church: priests are to be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord; to teach, and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever. For the fulfilment of so weighty an office and charge the work of the priest must be directed along two main channels. He has, in the first place, a public ministry. He is licensed to a church and given a parochial or other sphere of duty, and there he is to preach the Gospel, to minister the sacraments, to teach the Faith, and to conduct public worship. He must necessarily think of his work in terms of groups of people, and learn to preach, teach, and minister in services and sacraments in such a way as to reach men and women's hearts and minds when they are assembled together. But in thinking of the flock he is bound also to think of the individuals who compose it; and therefore the priest has a second function, no less important and even more exacting, his private ministration to individuals.

The demands of the priesthood are so great largely because the priest's work, in these two divisions of it, calls for so varied and so delicate a technique. It is hardly to be expected that every priest will achieve mastery in so many

arts. His office requires that he shall be an effective preacher, a skilled teacher, an adept in the management of public worship, a competent scholar and theologian; it also demands of him the knowledge, tact, and skill of the trained physician of souls, able to guide the spiritual and moral life of the souls whose "cure" is laid upon him. No man could take upon himself a task so complicated and exacting if it were not for the assurance of Divine grace, the confidence through Christ to God-ward claimed by St. Paul. St. Paul speaks for all his successors in the ministry of Christ's Church when he says "not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God." In that spirit the Christian priest will seek to equip himself as far as may be with the special knowledge and skill appropriate to each of the two main branches of his work, his public and his private ministrations. He must know how to attempt both if he is to fulfil his duty of feeding the flock entrusted to him and of seeking the lost; and he must be prepared to go on learning until the day when he resigns his "cure of souls" into the hands of his Master and stands before God to give account of his stewardship.

Fundamental as is this constant endeavour to equip himself with the proper technique for his work, there is something even more fundamental—the priest's clear grasp and understanding of the purpose to which all his efforts should be directed. The pastor's business is with holiness, the Christian ideal of life as it is perfectly exemplified and taught by Jesus Christ. He must know the nature and content of that ideal to which he seeks to bring his people, making it the constant theme of his study and meditation as well as the aim of his own interior life. No amount of detailed suggestions, such as the following

pages seek to give, on the methods and technique of his ministry will avail the priest much, if he does not repeatedly set before himself the objective which gives his work its supreme and special value. In this first chapter, therefore, we shall be concerned with a general consideration of the Christian ideal of holiness in its bearing on the pastoral work of the priest.

It will be a convenient line of approach to the subject if we begin by examining briefly the universal problem of the good life. All men, Christians and non-Christians alike, are faced with this problem, because it is bound up with human life and human nature as such. The *data* belong to common human experience, and the solution of the problem they present is the most pressing, because the deepest and most pervasive, of all human needs.

The situation in which man finds himself may be stated in terms of a widely held and practically useful psychological analysis. When we contemplate human nature, we find ourselves confronted with two groups of *data*. On the one hand there is the instinctive, conative energy which is the raw material of all human activity; on the other there are the various controls by which that energy is regulated and diverted into the service of those myriad purposes and ends which human beings set before themselves. The problem of the good life is the problem of the relationship between these two groups of facts. Primarily, the moral value of any individual life depends on the right use of the controls, but to some extent it also depends on the amount of free vital energy. Men with a subnormal or inhibited vitality are apt to be timorous, unadventurous, and negative in character, and the strong drives of a robust psychical constitution, though they may lead to the grosser and more violent forms of evil-doing, are also

ordinarily required for the more adventurous and constructive virtues. We are not for the moment concerned to ask whether naturally low-powered human beings can be "born anew" to a courageous and heroic virtue far in advance of anything that the most favourably endowed "natural man" can reach; we are now confining ourselves to ordinary unregenerate humanity, and at this level it is a matter of common observation and experience that men are as variable in their psychical constitution as they are in physical robustness and strength.

The second stage in our analysis reveals the fact that the instinctive energy of man aims at certain recognisable ends towards which there are direct channels for the release of energy. Psychologists are divided on the question whether we may trust the *prima facie* evidence for a number—variously estimated by different authorities—of specialised "instincts" into which the general conative energy of human life can be structurally divided. For our present purpose there is no need to enter into this controversy. It is sufficient to observe that there are specialised channels of some sort along which energy tends to flow spontaneously. These channels can be conveniently divided into two groups. Along one set of channels flow the instinctive impulses which subserve the preservation of the individual, along the other those impulses which lead to the reproduction of the species. So much we can assert with confidence, for no observer of human nature can have any doubt of the presence and potency of these impulses within himself and in other people. They are necessary for the life of the individual and the race, and without them there would be no human beings at all.

The release of energy along the direct natural routes is

necessary and normal for man as for the lower animals. Man must have sufficient food, drink, and warmth, if he is to live; and if he is to continue his race, he must have the direct satisfaction of his sexual and parental impulses. Yet notoriously he is unable to allow himself to follow his instinctive urges unchecked; that is the way to physical and moral disaster. Of all figments the "noble savage," who lives joyously in the free exercise of his instinctive desires, is the most fantastic and unreal. Food, drink, and warmth may be, and constantly are, sought after in an inordinate way, which weakens and even destroys man's bodily and psychic health. Man has no periodic breeding season to serve as a natural check on his sexual desires, but is sexually excitable at any time. The pugnacious and acquisitive impulses are equally untrustworthy, as the sorrowful history of man's wars and economic miseries makes distressingly plain. It is clear that there is no automatic self-regulator which secures for man the exact adjustment of instinctive activity to well-being, even on the physical level.

Yet the problem remains one of regulation, not annihilation, of impulse. Many men, in all historical ages, have found it a tempting solution of the problem to denounce the satisfaction of instinctive impulses, and to regard them as inherently evil. To such men the good life has seemed to be a progressive crushing of impulse until death comes to release the imprisoned soul of man from his animal nature and to allow the freed spirit to soar to its proper home. Such radical pessimism about the life of earth is gratuitous; and as it is commonly expressed in terms of a doctrine identifying matter and evil, it is false, since moral evil is spiritual. For the Christian it is ruled out by the fundamental doctrine of God's creation of earth as well as

of heaven; a doctrine which, while it admits the possibility of some mysterious contamination of the Order of Nature, such as St. Paul seems to see when he speaks of the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together until now, yet cannot admit any original, or any total, corruption of the material universe which would make matter essentially evil. The instinctive urges in man are disordered, and the theologian expresses that manifest fact in the doctrine of original sin; but man's animal nature is not in itself evil.

Hence the problem of the good life is not soluble by mere negations and prohibitions aimed at the suppression of the instinctive urges, but by their right control. That control must produce a shift of desires towards ethically valuable ends and the building-up of a structure of right "sentiments"[1] through which energy can find morally acceptable release.

In the moral life, humanly speaking, control is exercised by reason and conscience from within and by various forms of social pressure from without. By "conscience" here we mean the internal recognition of an "ought," of what should be; we cannot now enter into the metaphysical and psychological complexities surrounding the word. The forms of social pressure are manifold, and include such forces as law and public opinion, social conventions and standards of respectability, tradition, the authority of religious and other groups capable of inspiring sentiments of loyalty and respect. Human society is made possible when these regulative forces are capable of controlling

[1]A sentiment, in the psychological sense of the word, is a system of mental dispositions arising from the primary instincts and concerned with a particular object or class of objects, *e.g.*, the scholar's love of learning, the good housewife's devotion to home duties, the racing man's respect for the Jockey Club, are sentiments.

the natural play of instinct, so that men are prepared to forego immediate satisfaction for the sake of remoter goods.

It is clear that these controls are not, and never have been, completely effective. Despite thousands of years of civilised life man is still the most pugnacious, acquisitive, and sexually greedy animal known to science. By comparison with the masterful drives of instinct the controls are weak, and their voice is easily silenced. This frailty of human nature is visible on every side in the lives of individual men and women, and it is frailty rather than malignity which is the principal flaw in the troubled life of mankind. What can be seen in individual lives is, of course, manifest also in the life of nations and peoples. When the picture of uncontrolled human desires is seen magnified to the size of a French, Russian, or Spanish revolution, the havoc and horror make men recoil from what they see of their own hearts. The conquest of Nature might have been wholly beneficent in its results. Yet while it gives the farmer his fertilizers and the surgeon his anæsthetics, it also arms the frightened or the covetous politician with aerial bombs and poison gas. Those acquisitive impulses which ought to provide the energy for prudent and far-sighted planning to meet the economic needs of the human family are made to minister to human greed, so that in a world of plenty many millions lack proper food, clothing, and houseroom. The sexual impulses which, when rightly controlled, can build one of the fairest things on earth, a vigorous and happy family life, are among the most disastrous wreckers of happiness within human experience.

The controls are not only weak. They are frequently in conflict among themselves. The voice of reason and con-

science, heard by prophets and pioneers, is often drowned by the thunders of social authority. History is full of the tragic misunderstandings between the reformer and the guardians of social stability and tradition who reject or persecute him. The prophets are slain and subsequent generations build their memorials. Only the fool or the bigot can deny that both reform and tradition are necessary for social welfare: yet the demand of the individual conscience for the redressing of wrongs and the realisation of new social values seems to be in almost necessary conflict from time to time with the inherited conventions of society, if moral and cultural progress is to be made.

Conscience, too, is always fallible: and though men must obey their conscience and obey the light they have, yet conscience is commonly ill-instructed and is often perverted. Men will do the most horrible things conscientiously and with a sincere belief that their actions are necessary and right. The men who burnt St. Joan were not unscrupulous and cynical scoundrels, and the greatness of Shaw's play *Saint Joan* is in large part due to the truth and poignancy of his characterisation, in which the tragedy of ill-instructed conscience could hardly be more vividly expressed. Again, rational reflexion on moral choices not only fails to ensure that an act recognised as good is carried out in practice; it is no more an infallible guide than conscience. It is only too liable to slip into rationalisation or self-sophistication, the finding of bad reasons for what our desires lead us to do. Yet no man can reasonably doubt that conscience and rational reflexion are supremely good and precious powers.

We are no better off with social convention. Though it is the necessary fly-wheel of common life, it is confessedly

variable and uncertain as a moral force. One culture revolts indignantly against what another culture regards with indifference or even approval. Slavery, infanticide, and torture have been recognised institutions in highly civilised communities.

Nor are these the only difficulties in the way of the good life for man. The controls are not merely weak, ineffective, and discordant. They are also not self-explanatory, and therefore they are not ultimately authoritative. As we have seen, the authority of conscience, though absolute for the individual, is obviously in need of further support when individual consciences clash, and when each is in need (as all are) of further enlightenment. Reason is not self-sufficient, since it depends on certain assumed postulates or self-evident axioms. I cannot effectively apply my reasoning powers without reference to certain presuppositions of which I can give no rational proof, as, for example, the law of contradiction or the postulate of the uniformity of nature. All scientific reasoning aims at establishing certain general truths, which are constant and universally applicable; but all these truths depend for their validity upon the unprovable assumption that natural processes will be the same next Monday as they are to-day. Social convention is clearly too local and transitory to be self-sufficient. We need some more ultimate test by which to decide between its mutually incompatible, and often contradictory, pronouncements.

In view of these considerations we cannot find satisfaction in any secularist or naturalistic philosophy of morals. If we are to take seriously the moral aspirations of mankind, we are bound to seek a more ultimate criterion and a profounder motive for the good life. They

must be found, if at all, in the ultimate structure and constitution of the universe.

Christianity presents us with this finality in its doctrine of God. In the last resort the Christian ethic, though it appeals to the moral intuitions of mankind, depends on Christian theology both for its content and for its validity.

The content of the Christian ethic is in large measure identical with the deliverances of the best moral teachers of mankind, though it goes further in certain vital points; but the identity is there because, as the Christian faith shows us, the light of God has always shined, and God has never left Himself without witness. Christ fulfils the law and deepens its meaning; the Christian ethic is the crown of the moral training of mankind by the Light that lighteneth every man.

The validity of the moral law, like its content, proceeds from God. I may recognise, when it is pointed out to me, that, for example, the Golden Rule is true and right, as many sages have taught. I may find in myself a sympathetic response to that ideal, even when I fail to obey it. But in recognising the claim of this moral law I may also doubt whether it is part of the nature of things, or, maybe, something imposed on a recalcitrant universe by the generous movement of man's spirit, an ephemeral creature's defiance of a cold and ruthless fate. The doubt can be resolved only if a rational faith assures me that there is a God who is omnipotent Love, and who calls upon His human children to be perfect as He is perfect and to share His loving purposes in complete loyalty to Himself. Since Christianity gives me this faith, I can discover in the moral law something eternal, because it is grounded in the eternal God.

The governing principle of Christian ethics and the Christian ideal of holiness proceed directly from this theocentric attitude to life. Man exists not to satisfy his innate impulses according to the desire of the moment, nor yet to crush out his animal nature. His control of impulse is to be in accordance with the moral law written in conscience, but that conformity to law is not to be interpreted as obedience to an abstract rule discovered by philosophical reflexion upon the actual moral life of man and codified into an ever more complicated mass of scribal regulations. Man exists to worship God through Christ, and that by the offering of a loving and intelligent conformity to the will of God. Worship is the orientation of life Godwards, and Christian morals are rooted in a personal relationship between God and the soul of man. This is man's vocation and the first and greatest commandment.

Such a course of life is rightly called *virtuous*, since it consists in the practice of the virtues; and it may be called, with equal justification, the fulfilment of *duty*, since it is man's bounden duty, as a being capable of recognising moral and spiritual values, to make a fitting response to the Source and Centre of all values. Yet the pursuit of Christian virtue is not the cultivation of a self-centred moral athleticism; nor is the fulfilment of Christian duty to be thought of as merely the exact performance of a system of imposed precepts. Rather the Christian life is the personal answer of a son to the guidance of a Father whose wisdom and love are absolute, and therefore to be trusted without reserve. In that obedience is perfect freedom, because it is the liberation of the soul from everything that thwarts its fulfilment of the supernatural end for which it was created. *Cui servire est regnare:* that is

the Christian ideal and Christian holiness. As a distinguished psychologist has put it:

> "There is really only one virtue—humble volitional conformity to the will of God—and only one sin—defiance of God's will."[1]

Inseparably connected with the theocentric ethic of Christianity is man's love of his fellow men. The Christian's love of God must not be interpreted in any individualistic way. The Christian life is not "the flight of the alone to the Alone," nor is it true of the religion of the New Testament that "religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness".

Holiness has often been thought of as "separateness," a withdrawal from social activity in order to cultivate a lonely concentration on God. As an occasional exercise, in retreat, this is a familiar and highly valuable religious practice: and there is a real contribution to be made to the rich variety of Christian life by the solitary contemplative with a genuine vocation to the eremitical life. But the exceptions serve only to prove the rule. The New Testament clearly lays down the necessity of love of neighbour for the Christian. Christ ranks love of neighbour as a commandment "like unto" the commandment to love God, and St. John has given a masterly exposition of the Lord's teaching in his first epistle. To love one another is to abide in God; he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen cannot love God whom he hath not seen.

Moreover, the family of God, the Church, is for the New Testament a structural part of the Gospel of Christ crucified, and only in "love of the brethren" can true Christianity become actual. The Kingdom of God,

[1]Rudolf Allers: *The Psychology of Character*, p. 238.

actualised in a Divine Society, at once the Kingdom's organ and its nucleus, lies at the heart of the Gospel. Christian holiness is therefore essentially corporate and social. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in the fellowship of the Church. The pursuit of personal holiness, the purification of self by repentance and discipline, remains a fundamentally necessary aim of the Christian life. But it is not for self-regarding ends. It is required in order that the Church, the Body of Christ, may in each and every member glorify God by offering the reasonable holy and living sacrifice of itself in union with the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Christian mysticism, often regarded as the highest kind of religious individualism, actually provides convincing evidence of the social character of Christian holiness. For it is the common teaching of the mystical writers that in the first stage of the mystic way, the "way of purgation," a firm foundation of ordinary social and civic virtue must be laid before the soul can pass to the illuminative and unitive stages of its intimate dealings with God. Only so can the necessary purification of desire be attained.

The Christian life may therefore be expressed in terms of Vocation. The Christian is called to co-operation with the creative and redemptive purposes of God. In fulfilling that vocation he finds his own self-expression, the outlet for his energies, and the harmonious development of his moral being. He moves, that is, to the goal of perfection; but he does not seek perfection; he seeks God. The hedonistic fallacy has a moralistic parallel. We get pleasure by not aiming directly at it. We become saints not by aiming self-consciously at sanctity, but by loving God and our neighbour with all our heart, mind, and strength.

The sphere in which the answer to the call of God can be

made is co-terminous with man's life and is not confined to any special type of career. The well-worn words of George Herbert, "who sweeps a room as for thy laws Makes that and the action fine," give homely expression to the cardinal principle of the Christian life. Yet it is not always realised that this principle is two-edged. Christian morals, and in particular the Christian principle of vocation, imply not only an acceptance, but also a criticism, of man's "work," his social and economic activities, no less than of what is called "private life."

They imply acceptance, because theoretically any honest work which serves socially useful ends should be regarded as a sphere in which the Christian vocation can be exercised: the bricklayer and the shop keeper, the professional golfer and the actor, should find in their occupations a principal means of serving God and their neighbour. But the Christian principle implies criticism as well, because where it is difficult to apply the conception of vocation, as in modern industrial conditions it often is, doubt is at once thrown upon a social order so constructed. On the one hand Christianity cannot tolerate any doctrine of the Christian life which takes from the poor, and those whose work is the drudgery of the modern Gibeonites, their chance of attaining to holiness; here and now, as well as in Utopia, Christian moral principles and ideals can be put into practice, and are put into practice in the most unpromising conditions. But on the other hand, the Church can never be content to let circumstances thwart and cramp personality; its principle of vocation must make it suspicious and troubled in conscience wherever men and women are regarded as "hands," living tools of merely economic value.

The social situation presents further obstacles to a

Christian mode of living when, as to-day, only a minority of people have any real choice of a career or any chance of discovering and training their innate aptitudes. For the majority their work is what they were forced to take up by economic stress at an age when they were little more than children. Also, there are millions who are doomed to more or less prolonged unemployment, deterioration of skill, and a sense that they are not wanted. In dealing with individuals handicapped in these ways the priest has an exceedingly delicate and difficult task when he tries to build up in them the sense of vocation. Yet he should by no means abandon the ideal of vocation as inapplicable.

His is the arduous but all-important work, in these cases, of doing some pioneering in education for leisure. Such education is becoming more and more urgent: and although the enforced idleness of men and women wholly untrained in the use of leisure presents the task in its most intractable form, the fruitful use of leisure markedly calls for the concept of vocation. For otherwise the occupation of leisure may well become a trivial filling-in of time accompanied by a sense of futility and unreality. It is something, no doubt, to give a man who is unemployed, or engaged on uncongenial or socially valueless work, an alternative to mere idleness or mere boredom. But it is a much greater and more permanent solution of the problem if the creative use of leisure can be commended to the individuals concerned as an opportunity for serving God. The Church alone can so illumine the lives of those whom the economic system discards or condemns to anxiety and discontent. For no other agency is really equipped with the ideas needed to meet the situation. For all sorts and conditions of men there is one

way marked out to fulness of life; it is the way of Christ, who came to do His Father's will and to minister, not to be ministered unto. It is along this way that the pastor must himself walk and teach his people to walk.

CHAPTER II

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

WE have considered the Christian ideal of holiness, and we have seen that it can be fully realised only in the fellowship of the Church. According to the New Testament, Christians are made holy, or sanctified, by the Holy Spirit who indwells the Church.[1] We must, therefore, turn next to a consideration of the Holy Spirit and the Church in relation to the pastoral office.

The expression, "the Spirit of God" meets us on the very first page of the Bible, and it is of frequent occurrence throughout the Old Testament. Moreover, in three late passages we find mention of the "Holy Spirit."[2] Yet it is going beyond the evidence to say that the Spirit is regarded yet as a distinct *hypostasis*, or person. He *is* Yahweh. It would be nearer the truth (though it would still not be true) to say that the two analogous expressions, the "Wisdom" and the *Logos*, or Word of God are so regarded. These three conceptions seem to run concurrently in the Old Testament without ever being clearly related to one another, although in the Book of Wisdom the Spirit is identified with Wisdom personified. Even so, it is hard to resist the conclusion that this mode of speech is metaphorical.

[1] *Cf.*, *e.g.*, Rom. XV, 16; 1 Cor. VI, 11; 2 Thess. II, 13; Heb. IX, 14; X, 14-17, & 29; 1 Peter, 1, 2.
[2] Psalm LI, 11; Isa. LXIII, 10 and 11.

When we come to the New Testament, the Spirit as a distinguished *hypostasis* is gradually recognised and we have the beginnings of the doctrine of the Trinity. Yet hardly more than beginnings in most of the New Testament books. Apart from a few isolated passages, it is not until we come to the Johannine writings that we find an explicitly Trinitarian mode of speech.

There is nothing to cause surprise or concern in this, inasmuch as there must needs have been a development of the understanding of the doctrine of God as of other Christian doctrines. But it is important from our present point of view to ask what was the underlying cause which led to the development of the doctrine of the Spirit as a distinguishable *hypostasis* or person. The evidence seems to suggest fairly clearly that it was the corporate experience of the Christian Church. This is indicated, for example, by the form taken by the earliest passage in the New Testament in which a Trinitarian formula occurs, viz. 2 Corinthians XIII, 14, which contains what is commonly known as "the grace." In this passage it is remarkable to find the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" preceding "the love of God." The reason seems to be that we have here expressed the chronological order in which the discovery of the love of God was made. It was made through the "grace" of Christ, and it was developed through the fellowship, or "communion" of the Spirit. That is to say, it seems to have been through the experience of Christian love (*agape*) in the fellowship of the saints that the distinctive power and personality of the Spirit was first recognised. If so, this is what our own experience of the fellowship of the Spirit to-day would lead us to expect.

From the Day of Pentecost onwards, the personality of

the Spirit was increasingly apprehended in the corporate life of the Christian Church. The Church came to be recognised as the Spirit-bearing Body. "There is one body and one Spirit" wrote St. Paul. Here was an essentially new phenomenon. The ancient Jewish Church affords only an incomplete parallel. It was the Spirit of Jesus who made the Church truly one in the first instance, and who is ever drawing together the broken limbs to-day. The unity of the Jewish Church, although nominally based on the unity of Yahweh, in practice tended to be largely negative, based on hostility to the heathen. The unity of the Christian Church was from the first based upon the unity of the One Spirit. It was a unity not of race but of grace. The difference is fundamental. It was, in fact, largely due to it that our Lord was sent to the Cross.

The Jews were prepared to support a Messiah who was a thoroughgoing Nationalist. They were angrily disappointed with One who claimed to usher in a Kingdom which should be as wide as humanity itself.[1]

At first, the inspiration of the Spirit tended to be associated chiefly with abnormal manifestations, glossolaly and the like. This was only to be expected, for we find the same phenomenon in the Old Testament, where the prevailing view of inspiration saw it as something sudden and more or less unusual. In the Church, however, as time went on, the working of the Spirit was less and less judged by outward manifestations of an abnormal character. It came to be seen that the chief fruits of the Spirit are ethical. Thus St. Paul was concerned to lay

[1]Although our Lord appears to have confined His preaching to Jews, the implication of His teaching was plainly universalist. For a discussion of the reasons why our Lord thus confined His teaching, see the chapter by F. D. V. Narborough in *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation.*

stress on those more excellent *charismata*, of which the greatest was *agape*. This ethical valuation of the Spirit's manifestations, however, did not at first, as we might have expected, do away with the belief in the *irresistibility* of the Spirit, which we find in the Old Testament. Thus, for example, it was thought at first that those who had been born again could not sin (1 John III, 9 and V, 18; but *cf.* V, 16) until experience clearly taught otherwise. This misconception, however, is one which has never completely disappeared, and from time to time in the course of Church history we see it raising its head.

It would seem, then, that the Catholic doctrine of the personality of the Spirit can be appreciated fully only by those who have had experience of the *koinonia* of the Spirit. This is indispensable for a right understanding of Christianity. To lead men to a right appreciation of this may be said to be the supreme pastoral task of the Priest. The reason why the average Christian has so little understanding of the Holy Spirit is because as a rule he has but little appreciation of the fellowship, or *koinonia*, of the Spirit. This is particularly the case with the Englishman, whose deeply rooted individualism makes it desperately difficult for him to understand a religion which is social through and through. He finds it almost impossible to rid his mind of the notion that religion is, after all, a private affair between "my soul and God." We may have got rid of most of the high pews in our churches in this country, but we certainly have not got rid of the idea which they symbolised. In the majority of congregations there still exist invisible barriers which must be broken down if they are to realise the real meaning of Christianity.

It has often been pointed out that there is great significance in the fact that after the phrase in the creed, "I believe in the Holy Ghost" occur immediately the words, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." All Christians must, if possible, be led to realise that it is only in the fellowship of the Church that belief in the Holy Spirit can be fully attained. Unfortunately, there has been a persistent tendency throughout the history of the Church to evade the demands of the Fellowship. We can see the first manifestations of this tendency in the behaviour of Ananias and Sapphira with its disastrous consequences. If their successors have not shared the same physical punishment, the spiritual consequences of their conduct have been not less disastrous. Bishop Gore was right when he said: "How to make the principle of this sequence effective again in modern society is, I think, actually the most important matter for consideration by Christians at the present day."

The wrongness of the usual modern approach to Christianity is clearly indicated by the meaning which we are accustomed to associate with the word "Communion" or *koinonia*. To the average Christian to-day this suggests a service in which a person goes to church in order to "make his communion" with God. As a rule, there is little or no thought of also making communion with his fellow Christians present with him in the church. Yet this was undoubtedly what the word "communion" suggested to a Christian in the first century. So we read: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's teaching and in fellowship (literally "in the communion") in the breaking of bread and the prayers."[1] In this passage the word "communion" stands, not for the service which to-day

[1]Acts II, 42, R.V.

we call Holy Communion, but for the people who come to the service. The first Christians knew that communion with God and communion with our fellow Christians are inseparable parts of one process. If a spatial metaphor may be allowed, they knew that communion must be not only vertical but also horizontal. It must be *both* of these. The tendency of the average Christian to-day is to think of communion solely in terms of the vertical, leaving his neighbour practically out of account. But there are some who would stress the horizontal at the expense of the vertical. This is the mistake of the humanitarians who are, like the poor, always with us. To attempt to hold communion with God without communion with man is to seek what is impossible. It is equally impossible satisfactorily to hold communion with man apart from communion with God. That is why all merely humanitarian schemes ultimately come to grief.

The difference in outlook between the first Christians and ourselves in England to-day is vast. In the New Testament, as we have seen, worship was pre-eminently a *koinonia* of the Spirit, wherein man found communion with his God and with his fellows "in the unity of the Spirit." We have watered down that great phrase into a mere metaphor, as, for instance, in the Prayer for all Conditions of men, where we pray that all Christians may hold the faith "in unity of spirit." Let us, by all means, restore the vital word "the" and the capital "S" whenever we use that prayer. Its omission was surely one of those unconscious lapses which betray the hidden tendencies of the heart. We have individualised the glorious fellowship of the saints to such an extent that what is, in fact, the *koinonia* of the Spirit has come to be regarded as a "private affair between my soul and God."

The modern priest must strive to make men see the difference between the *koinonia* of the Spirit, which is Christian worship, and what has been ironically described as "a fortuitous concourse of spiritual atoms conducting their private devotions in a public place."

The result of the modern failure of which we have been speaking has been unfortunate beyond words. It is at the root of half of the pastoral difficulties of the modern parish priest. It has led to an almost complete failure on the part of many professing Christians to appreciate the meaning of the oft-repeated words "I believe in the Holy Ghost," and in consequence to a failure to understand what Christianity really means. The Christian religion is the *koinonia* of the Spirit, or it is nothing. This failure manifests itself prominently to-day in at least four ways. In the first place, it has been largely responsible for the decay of church-going. At one time, people went to church as a matter of custom, as they still do in some places even to-day. When that custom broke down, however, there was in many congregations so little apprehension of the *koinonia* of the Spirit that people naturally left off going to church. As a rule, they "rationalised" their conduct by saying that it is possible to be "a good Christian" without going to church. Although doubtless professing to be "Bible Christians" they have been, generally speaking, sublimely unconscious that the Bible knows nothing of "good Christians" who do not go to church. Indeed the very suggestion of such a possibility would have filled a first-century Christian with open-eyed amazement. Once we have recovered the religion of the Spirit, as it is presented to us in the New Testament, we shall not have to persuade people that they ought to go to church.

In the second place, the notion of *philadelphia*, which is central in the New Testament, has tended to be forgotten. As Bishop Gore pointed out, the word "ecclesiastical" ought to mean "brotherly." The vast difference in meaning between these two terms to-day sufficiently illustrates the degree to which we have fallen away from the ideal. Here, in fact, is the touchstone of true Christianity. "He that loveth not his brother (*i.e.*, fellow-Christian) whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" This *philadelphia* is one aspect of *agape*, the production of which is the supreme glory of the work of the Holy Spirit. That is why moral offences are regarded in the New Testament not merely as failures to observe a moral code, but as offences against the Holy Spirit. They "grieve the Spirit," and, in extreme cases, may even "quench the Spirit." Many passages illustrate this point of view (*Cf.*, for example, Ephes. IV, 1-4, 29 and 30; 1 Thess. IV, 8 and 9; 1 Pet. IV, 8-10). Here is the true basis of Christian ethics. Morality is not an attempt to observe an external law, on the one hand; nor, on the other, is it a private matter of the individual conscience. It is the living of a life in the Spirit, whereby a person is united to God and his fellow men through Christ. Every act must be judged from this twofold point of view. It may be regarded as an offence against the Head or it may be regarded as an offence against the other members of the Body. In either case it is sinful, if it is an offence against the *koinonia* of the Spirit.The love of God is a fire which must needs manifest itself in brotherly love. "Our God is a consuming fire. Let brotherly love continue." Here is a sequence which is unhappily obscured by our modern chapter divisions.[1]

[1]Heb. XII, 29 and XIII, 1.

The third result of the unfortunate individualism of the present-day conception of Christianity is an almost complete failure on the part of many members of the Church to realise their "missionary" obligations. So long as Christianity is regarded as a private affair between the individual and God, there is no inherent reason why he should necessarily be expected to pass that religion on to others; still less, why he should seek to extend it to the furthest bounds of humanity. But if Christianity is the life of a living Body, informed by the Spirit of God, it is obvious that it must necessarily grow, if this life is to be healthily maintained. Moreover, since no bounds can be set to the sphere of the Spirit's operations, this life cannot possibly be restricted to any one corner of the earth. "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male or female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus."[1] Humanity is one because God is one. It becomes obvious, at once, that Christianity is essentially "missionary" in nature.

Last, but by no means least, is the failure of the average modern Christian congregation to show any signs of a sense of corporate responsibility for the state of the world. In other words, the average Christian is not alive to the fact that he belongs to a Fellowship which is the Body of Him who claimed to be the Way, the Truth and the Life. If this claim is to be fulfilled, it is clear that Christians must be led to see the necessity of using their *minds* in the service of the Gospel. The Christian Church must be prepared to offer guidance in the perplexities of modern life. This can be done only if the individual members who compose the Church are mentally alert. They need to

[1]Gal. III, 28, (R.V.).

realise that evil is wrought by want of thought as much as by want of heart, and that it is not enough simply to tell men that they need salvation. They must also be prepared to try and show them how this salvation may be wrought in the ways of common life. Christian thinking is emphatically part of a really developed *koinonia* of the Spirit. The parish priest will find no part of his task more difficult than the arousing of the Christian conscience in this regard. Yet, if he is to be faithful to his task, he dare not shirk it. If he perseveres, he will obtain a rich reward for his flock.

We need, then, above all things to-day a recognition of the Church as the *koinonia,* or fellowship of the Spirit. Things are sadly changed since the time when St. Paul could write to the Thessalonians: "But concerning *philadelphia* ye have no need that one write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another,"[1] *i.e.,* by the Holy Spirit, mentioned in the preceding verse. The result of a firm adherence to this ideal would be to make the Church what we know it is intended to be—a light to the world, a city set on a hill. Church history is unfortunately apt to make depressing reading in the light of it. At the same time, it is "a cordial for drooping spirits," since the Holy Spirit has never left Himself without witness. Again and again, when to all appearance the Church has been moribund, there has suddenly come a revival of life, and Jesus Christ has been revealed afresh before the eyes of men. There is no parallel to this phenomenon elsewhere. All other leaders have been forgotten or superseded whether for the better or for the worse. Our Lord alone has always been in control of His followers, through the power of the Holy Spirit; yet we greatly

[1] I Thess. iv, 9.

hinder His work by lowering our ideals and forgetting the truth of our Christian calling.

It is surely clear that the heart of the pastoral office is to assist men to realise the meaning of the Fellowship of the Spirit. All the work of the priest with individuals must have this as its objective, and, conversely, apart from the sharing in the life of the Fellowship, no amount of pastoral care for individuals can, as a rule, be really fruitful in the highest sense. From time to time fresh attempts have been made—not always with a zeal according to knowledge—to realise the *koinonia* of the Spirit, from Montanism in the second century to the Group Movement in the twentieth. As a rule, such movements have been a reaction against the spiritual sluggishness of the day. Consequently, the lessons which they teach should be attentively sought out and taken to heart. One thing, however, is clear, namely, that the most satisfactory, because the Biblical, way of realising the *koinonia* of the Spirit is by making the Eucharist in every place where Christ is named the effective centre of the Fellowship. The faithful must be taught to find their inspiration Sunday by Sunday (not once a month—a most un-Biblical custom) in a great Parish Eucharist which shall be a true Communion, or *koinonia*, because the majority, at least, of those present will be communicating. By means of the weekly Parish Communion the *koinonia* of the Spirit will become a living reality, as it is becoming in many parishes to-day.

This was the ideal of the Reformers who constructed the Book of Common Prayer, and they were right. Neither of the customary arrangements for Sunday morning worship, whereby sung matins or non-communicating attendance at sung Mass has become the weekly worship of the

majority of morning churchgoers, is satisfactory in theory or in practice. To say this is not, of course, to disparage the Divine Office or non-communicating attendance as such. Yet we cannot rest content with these uses of them. Worship which neglects the showing forth of the Lord's death Sunday by Sunday is in line neither with the Bible nor with the Prayer Book, and the *koinonia* of the Spirit cannot but suffer. Eucharistic worship without communion is incomplete; and although non-communicating attendance is a legitimate development of proved spiritual value (leading, contrary to what might have been expected, to an increase in the number of communicants) especially for those who are regular communicants, there can be no question that the Christian ideal is best expressed by a Eucharist where the majority, at least, of the worshippers make their communion. Is it too much to hope that this ideal may be realised in every parish? Such an achievement would go far to cut across the old party divisions (which are more and more becoming obsolete), inasmuch as such a practice is obviously as "evangelical," as it is "catholic."

How is the parish priest to carry this out? The best method is to form a guild or group of communicants who will undertake to attend the Lord's service every Lord's Day. In this way a sufficient attendance will be assured to make a Parish Eucharist possible. The people must be taught the great doctrine of the "Communion of the Spirit" and urged to put their preferences and conveniences aside, and agree to come at the hour which suits the majority.[1] It may not always be possible to have only one Eucharist each Sunday in a parish, though that

[1]It should be early enough to make it reasonably possible for those who are minded to come fasting to do so.

is the ideal, but it is possible to call one of the celebrations the Parish Eucharist or the Parish Communion, and to urge all to attend that as far as possible. It should be made clear that any other celebrations are for the benefit of those who are unable to come at the hour of the Parish Eucharist. The ideal arrangement is to have the service sung by the people themselves, and there is no difficulty in working up to this. But in a small country parish it might be necessary to begin with a plain service with hymns. It should be borne in mind that a very good Sung Eucharist can be offered by a dozen or fifteen people who have thoroughly mastered a simple setting. It is a great mistake to suppose that a crowd of persons is necessary for the purpose. What *is* necessary is keenness and devotion on the part of those who come.

This indeed is the crux of the matter. To quote Bishop Gore again, what we need is not more Christians but better Christians. We need a body of keen weekly communicants in every parish who shall by their witness to the *koinonia* of the Spirit lead to the spread of the kingdom in that parish. It is the true method of evangelism. But they must manifest a real unity of the Spirit. They must "put away all anger and clamour" and behave as members one of another. In course of time such a body of faithful people will transform the face of any parish. It should be the chief aim of every parish priest to bring it into being. It is the only kind of religion which the New Testament knows.

The devil will, of course, do his utmost to smash such a fellowship, as he did in the first days of the Church when he entered into Ananias and Sapphira. The priest will have many difficulties and many trials as he sees the attempts of Satan to corrupt his flock and to cause dis-

sension to spring up among them. But he must not be discouraged. The powers that be with him are more than those that are against him.

CHAPTER III

THE MEANS OF GRACE

PURE mysticism is the "flight of the alone to the Alone"; and Christianity is not pure mysticism. The Christian by his baptism is made a member of the Body of Christ, and it is in the Body, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, as we have seen, that he seeks and finds the sanctifying and sustaining power of God. The pastors of the Church are therefore the stewards of the mysteries of God, as St. Paul calls them, and in the administration of God's gifts and favours to His people they are by their office concerned with the "here-and-now" of the Divine action; that is to say, with the means whereby in practice God's goodwill towards men is manifested. What, then, are the "means of grace"?

It is to be observed, in the first place, that the Divine Grace is given to men and women freely, and as they can receive it, and that for two main reasons. The relationship between God and the human soul is a personal relationship, and being personal it is not confined to any limited number of fixed occasions or *media*. Implicit in personality are the two categories of freedom and adaptability, and it is not to be supposed that in the highest of all personal activities, the dealings of the Divine Spirit with the spirit of man, there should be any diminution of these essentials of personality: rather we shall expect to find them fully operative. Furthermore, the Spirit bloweth

where it listeth, because it is the Spirit of God, who is perfectly free. We may not limit either the range or the *media* of the Divine Grace, and that simply because it is Divine. Whatever modes of Divine action present themselves as normal, and however authoritative and obligatory upon men any of them may be, it remains true, and vitally important, that, as the best scholasticism saw, *Deus non alligatur sacramentis suis*. This maxim is not for Christian theology a way of getting out of the difficulty presented by the good man who lives without the sacraments; it is a necessary corollary of the Christian doctrine of God. The unbaptised Quaker or Salvationist, manifestly showing the fruits of the Spirit, presents no theoretical difficulty to orthodoxy. On the contrary, the doctrine of God, the Johannine doctrine of the Logos, the doctrine of the universal redemption wrought by Christ, concur to make it logically necessary that such instances should be both theoretically possible and actually discoverable. And it is also true that such men are living, as it were, on borrowed capital. Without the historic sacramental Church in the background they could not be.

Nevertheless, it is equally true that there is an analogy in the spiritual world to the order and method of Nature. The infinite flexibility and resourcefulness of the Divine Love are not incompatible with regular and normal channels of its action, available at all times and in all places for those who in penitence, humility, and faith seek fellowship with God and their neighbour. Order is as divine as freedom and as implicit in the Christian doctrine of a personal God. And what we should rightly conclude from the truth of theism is reinforced tenfold by the religion of the Incarnation. The Incarnation leads us to expect that concrete modes and bodily vehicles of Divine

Grace will not be lacking in the supernatural order of the Kingdom established among men by Christ. Such *media*, congruous as they are with the psychophysical constitution of man, are also congruous with the essential message of the Christian Faith, namely, "the Word made flesh." The Incarnation, focussing the Divine in the concrete "here-and-now" of the space-time continuum, linking the historical order with the Eternal in a unique mode, has dispersed among Christian men specific occasions of Divine activity, the historic "means of grace" of the Christian Church. Side by side, therefore, with our recognition of the Divine freedom we may speak of *the* means of grace, referring to recognised spiritual avenues of the Divine Love in the form of sacraments. To do so is not to fall into mechanical language in spiritual matters, or to cramp the freedom of the Spirit. "Spiritual" does not mean "incalculable," still less "generalised" or "abstract." If St. John can regard the denial that the Word was made flesh as the spirit of Antichrist, we are strictly evangelical in being sacramental Christians.

The means of grace, therefore, cover a number of recognisable and definite channels of Divine action available normally to the Christian who uses them with repentance and faith, as well as an infinite number of ways in which God touches the soul according to its needs and its readiness at any given moment. Such means of grace must be recognisable, for they are for the way-faring man; they will be definite, for they will be the illimitable Spirit condescending to the limits of human experience.

Means of grace in this restricted sense arise out of historical acts and institutions of Christ and His apostles. They belong to the order of revelation, and cannot therefore be multiplied or discarded at will by those who

receive the revelation of God in Christ. Yet though they belong to the stuff of revelation, they are drawn from existing practices and experiences of the human race, and are not artificial or alien novelties thrust incongruously into the pattern of human life. It is with these that we are here concerned, because they admit of systematic description and everyday use. They are the normal means whereby the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ provides for the common and universal needs of the Christian folk.

We might say that the most comprehensive term for the means of grace is prayer, understood in the wide sense as the ascent of the mind to God. Each department of prayer is linked with the example and teaching of Jesus Christ. The liturgical prayer of the Church in Divine Service is derived from the habitual practice of the Lord in His earthly life. He was familiar from childhood with the psalms, scripture readings, and prayers of the synagogue, and consecrated by His example for all time what Christian devotion has come to call the Divine Office. The Eucharistic mysteries go back to the Last Supper, and—as we still strongly hold—to the Lord's own institution. The practice of private prayer was habitual with Jesus, as we see Him in the Gospels. Prayer in all these forms is that deliberate, worshipful, and loving attention to God which opens the spirit of man to the movement of the Divine Spirit, and so to an endless series of activities and benefits within the sphere of the Holy Spirit's ceaseless energy.

With prayer are associated, as specific concretions and directions of the prayer-activity, the sacraments of the Church, baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, matrimony, penance, ordination, and unction. These are specific

applications of the sacramental principle, sanctioned by Christ and His apostles, for the normal requirements of the Church's supernatural life. Initiation into the Divine Society, the sustenance of the supernatural life by communion, the consecration of the family, the restoration of the penitent, the provision of apostolic ministers of the Fellowship, the fortifying of the sick in body and soul, are regular and normal functions of the Body and its Divine Head; and congruously with the psycho-physical constitution of man they are ordinarily performed by sacramental means, known and available in all parts of the Church. The sacramental principle, of which the Church's sacraments are the evangelical examples, runs through all human life, and, as was said above, the sacraments are not alien to the familiar experience of mankind. A being constituted as man is, a body-soul using matter for spiritual ends, is in his essential nature a sacramental creature. The Incarnate Lord is Himself the supreme sacrament, but every man, since he daily and hourly brings the spiritual world of values into intimate contact with material things, is using the sacramental principle. From the trivial expression of the spiritual values of friendship in a handshake or a salute to the grandest manifestations of beauty or goodness in a great work of plastic or musical art or a heroic act of charity or self-sacrifice, the spiritual finds its expression in human affairs in and through the manipulation of material bodies. The Church, with a just appreciation of what is truly human, has employed the arts in divine worship. But apart from its artistic accompaniments, the Church's worship is in its own essence a meeting-place of matter and spirit. Catholic sacramentalism finds a certain appropriateness in ordered and beautiful rites; but

whether the ceremonies surrounding a sacrament be of the most elaborate or of the barest and simplest, its sacramental quality as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace is the essential thing. The ineffable interaction of God and the human soul in Holy Communion or the sacrament of Penance may with all reverence be called the Divine consecration of that universal human linking of inward and outward which we see whenever a child hugs its mother.

In explaining and commending the means of grace to his people the pastor will remember that these holy things may be misunderstood and mis-used. The corruption of the best is ever the worst, and it is therefore important to emphasise the conditions which hold for the right and effective use of the means of grace. Being external acts in their form they may be used and thought of in an external and mechanical way, and so be degraded into pieces of self-acting mechanism. This degradation is a caricature of their real nature, but it is a peril that needs to be guarded against. It is true that sacraments have their effect *ex opere operato*, since they are something done; but as the scholastic formula is frequently misunderstood, it is well to remember that in its full form it is *ex opere operato non opponentibus obicem*, and that the second half of the formula is of equal validity with the first. It is possible by interposing an obstacle to render the external act ineffective and deprive it of its spiritual value. All sacramental acts require for their efficacy the right dispositions in the recipient. The pastor will need to teach what these dispositions are, and just as much what they are not. The two conditions for the right reception of a sacrament are penitence and faith, and where these two conditions are genuinely present the action of God is to be

confidently expected as a personal response to the human soul in need.

This is a matter which may appear simple, but it requires careful teaching, and part of the teaching will often be the eradication of false conceptions of what is required of those who approach the sacraments. In particular it will often be found that the falsity lies not in carelessness or a casual indifference to the need for preparation. There is a widespread reverence for Holy Communion and a deep sense of its sacredness among English people. Rather the pastor will have to combat the notion that a settled habit of virtue, or warm feelings and intensity of fervour are required in those who approach the altar. It needs to be made plain that the sacraments are means of grace, not the prerogatives of the spiritual and moral *élite*, or the hobby of the devotionally minded. We have to admit that the widespread custom of the early service at eight o'clock, followed by matins at eleven, encourages people in this distorted estimate of the sacraments; for it leads them to suppose that attendance at the non-sacramental service, with its music and choir and sermon, is the ordinary way of Christian worship, and that sacraments are a more or less voluntary appendage to be added when you have reached that standard of piety.

Another type of mistaken thought on the sacraments is that which, consciously or sub-consciously, makes a quantitative estimate of sacramental grace. The specific end of a sacrament, *e.g.*, absolution and restoration to the fellowship of the Church in the sacrament of Penance, is attained when the sacrament is validly administered and received with penitent faith. But the mode of the operation of grace in the soul in any one sacramental act is too

subtle to be measured by any gauge; and quantitative standards are entirely out of the question.

Grace is not a thing, and cannot be reckoned in terms of amount, any more than courage can be called blue or oblong. Grace is relative to persons, not things or machines. Thus the effect of grace on the soul is qualitative, and normally relative to the capacity and spiritual receptivity of those who receive it. Men and women of very different levels of spiritual life approach the sacraments, but they are not all automatically brought to the same spiritual and moral state because they participate on any given occasion in one and the same sacramental act. A man struggling with many temptations and often falling may approach the sacraments with some genuine contrition, some real though imperfect faith, and yet lapse again into grave sin despite his absolution and communion. The not uncommon complaint, ostensibly based on such occurrences, that churchgoing and religion "don't seem to do any good" is both baseless and muddle-headed. It is not true in any case; but it appears plausible to some minds partly because they have a false mechanical view of grace, and partly because they fail to realise the existing handicap from which such a man as we have imagined has to start and the leeway he has to make up. The priest must make it plain to his people that such a one needs all the more to persevere in seeking God's grace, and that the sacraments are just as much for him and just as efficacious in his condition as for the man further on the road of sanctification.[1]

It is to be feared that pastoral negligence in the administration of Holy Baptism contributes something to

[1]Coudenhove, *The Burden of Belief*, has an admirable passage on this subject.

the spread of mechanical ideas of the sacraments. The Church has decided, with ample justification, to admit infants to baptism, but she requires godparents and demands of them that the child shall be christianly brought up, instructed in the Faith, and brought to the Bishop for confirmation as soon as he or she has grasped the elements of Christian faith and morals. Only on these terms is the Church ready to baptise those who are not yet capable of the repentance and faith which are otherwise necessary conditions for the reception of a sacrament. What only too often happens is that the duties of godparents are perfunctorily assumed and the child brought to be baptised because of a vague belief that it is right for a child to be "done," though the solemn obligations undertaken by godparents are neither realised at the time nor fulfilled in the years that follow. The clergy are in a difficult position, for it is hardly possible, in any given case, to be so sure that the conditions surrounding baptism will go unregarded as to warrant the grave step of refusing to baptise the child of professedly Christian people. Yet again and again they have suspicions which turn out to be just. The only practical remedy is faithful teaching, accompanied by the provision of such aids as the baptism roll and the Sunday School, regular pastoral visitation, and that constant going-about among his people which is the chief duty of the parish priest. Indiscriminate baptism, without the following-up of each child, does much to convey the suggestion that the supernatural is the magical. Such a gross confusion of thought is gravely prejudicial to religion, for the Catholic doctrine of sacramental grace is at the opposite extreme from magic. Magic is the compulsion of unseen powers by some pretended knowledge of a formula or other means of coercing

them to act as the magician desires. Sacraments, on the other hand, are prayers. The Church prays with the prayer of faith for God's loving kindness, relying on no power of her own but on the revelation of God's love for man in Christ. All the sacraments are fully supernatural on all occasions of their use; that is to say, they use natural things, water, bread, wine, oil, words, but these things are the occasions of that which man by nature cannot have, the redemptive effect of the Act of God in the Incarnation and the Atonement. They are not coercive, but imprecatory, not magical, but supernatural.

Since sacramental grace and non-sacramental grace are both the loving kindness of the one God, they are distinguished only by their mode. But that does not make it optional which mode the Christian is to use. Where sacramental grace is to be had, there is a moral obligation upon the Christian to seek it, and that for two main reasons. In the first place, it is grace given closely in association with the historic revelation of God in Christ whereby alone the Christian is saved. The pastor is not bolstering-up ecclesiastical vested interests when he commends the sacraments to his people; he is preaching the Gospel. Secondly, sacramental grace comes through the Fellowship and binds the Christian community together in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. The Church is part of the Gospel, and the sacraments are central in the Church's life. The Christian therefore cannot deliberately and with full knowledge neglect the sacraments without grave sin. They are rightly said to be of divine appointment, and the sin of ignoring them can be excused only on grounds of inculpable ignorance. It is part of the pastor's office to dispel that ignorance, which

prevails very widely. He will do so in the conviction that the more we value Christ and His Church, the deeper will be our appreciation of the means of grace and their place in the family life of the Christian fellowship.

CHAPTER IV

SIN AND FORGIVENESS

IT is a common characteristic of human nature that man feels himself to be, in some degree, a moral failure. His ability to conceive ideals is immensely greater than his power to achieve them. This sense of failure is often vague and ill-defined, but it is never absent. Every clergyman has heard the common death-bed defence: "I have never done anyone any harm," and this in itself implies a recognition, however dim, of a standard of conduct which has not been reached. Professor A. E. Taylor suggests that this universal sense of failure is due to the fact that "in man 'Nature' and 'supernature' meet; he has both within his own heart, and is a denizen at once of the temporal and of the eternal. He has not, like the animals, so far as we can judge of their inner life, one 'environment' to which he must adapt himself, but two, a secular and an eternal."[1]

The result of man's failure to adapt himself to these two environments is that

> "among all the creatures, many of whom are comic enough, man is alone in being tragic. His life, at the very best, is a tragi-comedy; at the worst, it is stark tragedy."[2]

But, more than this, man feels himself to be responsible for failure. Modern endocrinology may tell him that his

[1] A. E. Taylor in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 59.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 60.

failure is physiological, and for the most part outside his control. Some schools of sociology may assure him that all his activities are the resultant of forces which make up his environment; he may try to find comfort in such teaching, but he is not really convinced. He knows that he might have been other than he is, and done other than he has done.

The feeling of failure to which we have referred, which not infrequently includes a specific sense of guilt and stain, is not in itself a conviction of sin. The language of the fifty-first Psalm is meaningless to many who would go so far as to confess that they are not all that they might be.

> Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,
> And cleanse me from my sin.
> For I acknowledge my transgressions:
> And my sin is ever before me.
> Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
> And done that which is evil in thy sight:
>
> Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:
> Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
>
> Hide thy face from my sins,
> And blot out all my iniquities.

At what point, then, may man's sense of failure be said to become a sense of sin? We may perhaps approach our answer to this question by contrasting one man's reaction to a sense of failure with another's to a sense of sin.

At one end of the scale we find hopelessness and despair. The realisation that man can fail so completely that life

becomes unbearable was one of the factors contributing to the Stoic doctrine, that at a certain intolerable point suicide is not only permissible but obligatory. Such complete despair may be uncommon in a semi-Christian society such as ours; nevertheless, there are many men to-day who experience periods of such hopelessness when recovery seems impossible, and strive to compensate for their despair in a variety of ways, even though they may not attempt to end their lives. There is, moreover, the continual temptation, from which few are exempt, to give up all effort and drift with the tide. That is one reason why so many lapse from the practice of their religion. But the Church, which too often fails to give adequate teaching about sin and repentance, cannot be acquitted of blame.

At the other end of the scale there is the Christian saint. He is immeasurably more conscious of failure than his pagan brother; but here there is no despair; rather, a hopeful turning to God, in the realisation that no sin and no failure is too great to be redeemed by the Cross of Christ. The saint is aware, further, not only that he has failed to achieve the ideal, but that he has in some measure failed to respond to the outgoing love of God.

The point at which a sense of failure shades into a sense of sin is that at which man realises, however dimly, that he has not only failed himself and his fellows, but that he has failed God. To quote Professor Taylor again: "A sense of sin begins when man's dual environment is realised."

Sin, then, is a religious, and even a Christian conception, not merely an ethical one; we cannot think of it rightly if our point of view is simply anthropocentric. In other words, sin is only intelligible when set against a back-

ground of belief in God; in a God who is Personal, who is Creator, and who has a purpose for His creation. Sin, further, involves the recognition of a relationship between the sinner and God.

> "To an atheist sin can only appear to be an illusion. 'Against thee and thee only have I sinned,' is always the cry of the awakened sinner."[1]

Moreover, one's idea of the nature of sin will altogether depend upon the content of one's idea of God. A full sense of sin is only possible when man is conscious of the love of God and of God's relation to him as Father.

This theocentric conception of sin corrects a very common confusion of thought, which equates "sin" with the individual man's "guilt" or responsibility for actions which are sinful in themselves in the sight of God but which are not realised to be so by the sinner. The common conception of sin is, in fact, that which is described by the moral theologians as "mortal sin" in a "grave matter"; it involves, that is to say, complete freedom, entire consent, and full knowledge as to the nature of the act. Support for this view is to be found in the works of many writers on ethics. Thus, in Dr. F. R. Tennant's view

> "an act is constituted a sin by deviation from the standard or ideal *accessible at the time when the act is performed*; not by inconsistency with a law as yet unknown but perhaps destined to come to the agent's knowledge at a later date. Before we can assign a strictly moral value to an act, we must take into account not merely the outward incompatibility of act with law, as law and act would be apprehended by an instructed outside observer, but also the

[1] E. J. Bicknell in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 205.

> agent's attitude at the moment of his action. Hence the importance of the time-reference in any complete and accurate definition of sin."[1]

Such a view is open to serious objections. Consider the soldiers at Calvary. On the view here described, their actions, though—in themselves, and considered apart from the redemptive purposes of God which they have been made to serve—morally evil, cannot be called sinful, since they were deeds of men acting in accordance with duty and conscience. Yet our Lord's prayer clearly indicates that they needed forgiveness, although they were ignorant of the true nature of their actions. This apotheosis of conscientiousness, with its insistence on a strict separation between acts and their motives, and its refusal to regard as sinful any act or condition or circumstances for which a particular culprit or culprits cannot be branded as guilty without any reasonable benefit of the doubt, has curious consequences. It means that the results of an unawakened, or of a perverted conscience, may not be called sinful; and that unconscious sin is impossible.

[1] *The Concept of Sin*, p. 104. *Cf.* a letter of Lord Lytton (*Anthony*, pp. 199 ff.):

> ". . . You criticize my remark that the only standard of *moral* right or wrong is the conscience of the individual—that what a man does believing it to be right is right no matter how other people judge it, and that what a man does believing it to be wrong, is wrong, no matter how successfully he may himself defend or excuse it. Your answer is that people's consciences are elastic and are easily lulled to sleep by being continually denied a hearing, and therefore this pliant judge cannot be a reliable arbiter. You think you have a conclusive argument against me by saying that at one time you thought it wrong to get drunk, and that now you don't. This, however, if true, is not really a refutation of my contention, but merely an illustration of it. If you really thought it morally wrong to get drunk when you were fifteen, and if you really think it not morally wrong to get drunk at twenty-one, then I should say that if you had got drunk at fifteen you would have done wrong, and that at getting drunk at twenty-one you have not done wrong."

But common sense revolts against such conclusions. It is generally recognised that conduct which is in fact sinful may only be seen in its true light as the result of a later growth in the apprehension of moral values. Few would deny that the worst form of hypocrisy is that which has swollen to the point of deceiving itself. Such odious faults as self-pity, contempt and spiritual complacency are often largely unsuspected by those who sin—and sin, as it seems to observers, "with a cart-rope—" in these ways. The contrary of this position can only be maintained on the assumption of a rigid distinction between the "sinful" and the "evil." We submit that this popular distinction is artificial and unreal, and had better be abandoned. The negative answer usually given to the question. Can there be sinful acts or states which are not the consequences of sinful purposes? is only justified if "sinful purposes" is taken to mean "mortal sin." The sinfulness of sin is not to be estimated by the motives of the sinner, but by its incompatibility with the character and purposes of God. Men and societies are sinful in the degree to which they come short of the glory of God, that is, of what God would have them be.

It follows that sin must be clearly distinguished from personal guilt.[1] There is sin in the individual for the presence and influence of which he cannot, on any rational grounds, be held accountable: there are obstacles hindering the working of the Holy Spirit in his life, which he did

[1]This distinction is recognised in moral theology in the use of the terms *formal* and *material* sin. A formal sin is one knowingly and willingly committed, a material sin is an act which is objectively sinful but is not knowingly and wilfully committed. These terms help to make clear the fact of the objectivity of sin—an act is sinful in itself because it is contrary to God's Will—and yet recognise the fact that guilt involves the acquiescence of the will in a line of conduct known to be other than that which God wills.

not create and which he cannot control. Let us consider some of these obstacles.

First, there is the fact that every individual is a human being—that is, a member of a *fallen* race. The doctrine of the Fall, properly understood, is no more than a statement of two facts in the spiritual order: first, the fact that God is Love, and made man to be the image and reflection of Himself: and secondly, the fact that mankind, so far from thus fulfilling the purpose of its Creator, has within itself an infection or taint which inclines every human being, from the first moment when he is capable of determining his own ends, to choose self-centred and self-satisfying ones. Dr. Tennant, as is well known, regards the instincts which we share with the animal world as themselves a sufficient explanation of this universal bias of human nature towards evil. "Original sin," in his view,

> "must mean merely the solicitations of the lower nature, conceived of proleptically as sin because they constitute its potentiality."

He goes on:

> "the inherited appetitive tendencies, natural and necessary for the animal life of our non-human ancestry, are entrenched in every one of us before the moral consciousness dawns, and require incessant coercion and voluntary direction throughout life."[1]

But this is surely to miss the point of the problem to be explained, which is, precisely: why are not these tendencies naturally and without difficulty coercible? "The centre of the trouble," writes Archbishop Temple,

[1] *Encycl. Rel. Eth.*, Vol. IX. p. 564. *Cf. The Concept of Sin*, Chapter 5.

"is not the turbulent appetites, though they are troublesome enough, and the human faculty for imagination increases their turbulence. But the centre of the trouble is the personality as a whole, which is self-centred, and can only be wholesome and healthy if it is God-centred. This whole personality in action is the will; and it is the will which is perverted. Our primary need is not to control our passions by our purpose, but to direct our purpose itself to the right end. It is the form taken by our knowledge of good and evil that perverts our nature. We know good and evil, but know them amiss. We take them into our lives, but we mis-take them. The corruption is at the centre of rational and purposive life."[1]

It is this radical infection of human nature itself which constitutes Original Sin, and which makes it necessary that, if man is to be redeemed—restored to his divinely-intended status and potentiality—it must be by a power outside himself. Nor can it be supposed—the facts forbid it—that the influence of this taint is eradicated by the waters of Holy Baptism, even when the individual is thenceforward subjected to Christian influences and prayers—his own and others.[2] We must regard Holy Baptism as the initiation, in the life of each soul, of that divine, redemptive process which is continued, not only at his Confirmation, but at his every recourse to any of the sacraments, and indeed at every moment of his life as a member of the Body of Christ: a process which is never fully accomplished while he is *in via*.

It is this "innate bias or tendency towards evil" which is, somewhat unfortunately, called Original Sin:

"our nature, as we receive it, appears to be not merely un-

[1] *Nature, Man and God*, p. 367.
[2] *Cf.* Art. IX.

> developed but to possess a bias towards evil, a disunion with itself, an inability to rise to higher levels. We find ourselves out of sympathy with God from the start."[1]

This is not the place to trace the development of the doctrine of Original Sin from St. Augustine to Calvin; but one or two indisputable points may be mentioned.

1. It is unnecessary to associate the idea of our innate tendency towards evil with the Fall story in Genesis. Such an association does much to discredit the doctrine, the basis of which is to be found in the universal experience of humanity.
2. The idea of "original guilt" is no part of the Christian Faith. To say that the new-born child inherits guilt is nonsense; he inherits, rather, an infirmity predisposing him to sin under certain conditions.
3. Unless we use such a phrase as "children of wrath" very carefully, we blaspheme God, and give the impression that we suppose original sin to be the same thing as original guilt. A child of fourteen who, in answer to a question about Baptism, said that "Baptism is the washing away of the tendency to sin which we inherit," had probably been carelessly taught.

Man's share in the consequence of the Fall, then, is the first and most obvious handicap in the growth of any given individual's relationship to God. Original sin operates as an influence supplementary to the forces of evil attacking him from without: when temptation assails him, deep calls to deep.

[1]E. J. Bicknell in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 206.

There are other obstacles to the individual's relationship to God, other causes of sin. A man, at any stage of his pursuit of holiness, is impeded by his inherited temperament, by defective or perverted education, by lack of opportunity, by some "organ inferiority," or by "moral disease," by which is here meant some

> "congenital enfeeblement that may affect temperament, or intelligence, or physique as a whole—extreme degrees of common weaknesses to which in a restricted measure we are all more or less susceptible. Such weaknesses, when excessive, may favour a moral lapse in later life,"

though it has to be added that

> "they in no way constitute an inexorable and fatal propulsion towards it."[1]

Finally, we may notice the obstacles created by certain features of the modern world. It is unnecessary to expatiate on such obvious hindrances as undernourishment, unemployment, and that sense of being not wanted which is, perhaps, the most terrible consequence of the latter. More subtle obstacles exist. In a society dominated, as ours is, by the plutocratic motive, *unnecessary* stumbling-blocks are set up, not merely to Christian but to humane living. That worship of Mammon which is so large a part of the psychological background of our lives, is making it more and more difficult for men to maintain decent relationships with each other. Yet these are an essential precondition of right relationship on the supernatural plane. How are two neighbours, both unemployed,

[1]Quoted by Dewar and Hudson: *A Manual of Pastoral Psychology*, p. 139, from C. Burt: *The Young Delinquent*, p. 58.

to treat one another as brothers in Christ, when both are cogs in a soulless system which tells them—arbitrarily, unnecessarily and in defiance of obvious facts—that food and shelter can be found for only one of them? Alongside industrialism's ever-increasing tendency "to make the worker a merely incidental and rarer and rarer attendant upon the machine,"[1] orthodox finance maintains its unalterable decree that the fruits of production are for those, and those only, who have been concerned in the process of production. It is obvious enough that the economic *impasse* thus created places moral and spiritual obstacles in the path of millions of our fellows—at a time, be it noted, when man's astonishing mastery of the forces of nature is showing the way to removing them. The assumptions and inescapable influences of a plutocratic society put a premium on self-centredness and greed.

Recent writers have drawn attention to a further point: the confusion and uncertainty, in regard to obvious moral issues, with which many are faced to-day.

> "On the one hand the producer, be he inventor, engineer or works manager, seeks the technical objective of putting his goods on the market with a minimum of human labour, while on the other hand he is also pursuing the social objective of finding work for as many people as possible. How can these two objectives be reconciled? Because of this contradiction those engaged in economic life find themselves confronted with insoluble moral dilemmas as to duty, and the public are led to regard their moral responsibilities as fully discharged by the effort to keep or to find employment." A footnote gives examples: "Is it right for an employer to use new capital to introduce up-to-date plant which will cheapen and increase

[1] G. D. H. Cole: *Guide Through World Chaos*, p. 145.

> production by enabling him to dispense with a number of his employees? Ought employees to resist the introduction of such technical improvements, with a view to protecting their present means of livelihood?"[1]

Only God can assess the weight attaching, in the failure of any sinner to respond to His grace, to such handicaps and hindrances as have been here indicated. The physician of souls will have such things continually in mind—though (and this is important) he will tend to minimise rather than exaggerate them when he is concerned with the development of his own moral and spiritual life.

The New Testament contains two important definitions of sin: ἁμαρτία and ἀνομία. The first suggests the idea of missing a mark, or of failing to keep on the right track. The second involves the conception of rebellion or lawlessness, together with the ideas of law and lawgiver.

Other pictures to describe sin are also used.

> "It is suggested that sin resembles debt, or disease, or slavery, or pollution or homelessness or darkness, that it has the coldness of death itself: that its callousness is nothing but a second Calvary."[2]

Two main streams of thought emerge. The first is the *forensic* view, which paints sin in terms of disobedience and broken law. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 St. John III, 4). St. Thomas has defined sin as "free opposition to, or neglect of, the dictates of the Divine Will of the Creator on the part of the human will of the created." St. Augustine describes it as "a free violation of the moral law."

[1] *Interim Report* (Dec. 1934) of the Church Assembly's *Social and Industrial Commission on Unemployment.*
[2] K. E. Kirk: *Some Principles of Moral Theology*, p. 230.

The forensic view of sin is the basis of all Roman Catholic Moral Theology. The following definition is taken from *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, by Professor Henry Davis, S.J.

> "Sin is a morally bad human act, a privation of some obligatory good, a deflection from the order of right reason, and therefore from the law of God. It is a voluntary transgression of some moral law, of a law that imposes an obligation on the will. The first and fundamental law is the Eternal Law."

This emphasis upon the forensic conception of sin in Roman Catholic Moral Theology has had unfortunate results. The priest is looked upon almost exclusively as a judge, ministering justice in a tribunal, and the Sacrament of Penance is, therefore, in danger of being regarded as a legal transaction. Other aspects of the priest's office in regard to individuals are obscured. We shall see later that this over-emphasis has influenced teaching concerning the nature of "satisfaction" for sin. If the priest is a judge only, it is not only just but essential that his sentence should be, in some sense, commensurate with the offence, and Roman Catholic Moral Theology teaches, quite consistently, that the penance set should reflect the gravity of the sin, though, when a list of suggested penances is examined, it is seen at once that in practice this rule is found impossible. The sacrifice of the Cross is the one and only "satisfaction" for sin. And the meaning of the Cross is only apparent when sin is seen as a refusal of love rather than as a breaking of law.

A second conception presents sin as essentially a disorder of personality, resulting in a perverted will, which

turns man from his good, the love of God and relationship with Him.

> "God is love. In love He created man. In man's love God would have rejoiced; in God's love, man would have been blessed. And man, made in God's image, refused God, refused his own true good. He sought a separate life, and found it death. This is Sin . . . All Sin in its degree *separates* the soul from God: and whatever *separates* from God is sin."[1]

Sin is, in this view, a failure, more or less deliberate, to acknowledge our relationship to and dependence upon God our Father. It is therefore definitely a rejection of Love. Sin is possible for us because God is love and we are His children, endowed with a measure of freedom sufficient to allow us willingly to acknowledge or reject that relationship, to accept or refuse His Love.

Moreover it seems vital to stress the fact that when we sin it is we who separate ourselves from God. It is not God who casts us off. It is possible, but not obviously easy, to reconcile such a sentence as the following with the character of God as revealed in Christ.

> "Mortal sin moves the Divine displeasure against the sinner and deprives him of the Divine friendship."

But there is surely profound truth in the platitude that God hates sin but loves the sinner. Sin, in fact, as we have seen, will only be realised in its full horror when clearly set over against the perfect love and absolute holiness of God and His purpose for man.

[1]Aubrey Moore: *Some Aspects of Sin*, p. 65. Quoted by Dr. Grensted in *Psychology and God*, p. 129.

We obtain a clearer view of the character of sin if we see it as a disorder of personality, a perverted will, than if we think of it merely in forensic terms. But this does not mean that we may think sentimentally about it. Sin is that in the moral and spiritual order which hinders the purpose of God.

Traditional Moral Theology distinguishes between sinful acts which are "mortal" and those which are "venial." The distinction is commonly condemned to-day as either meaningless or dangerous. Nevertheless, it is found in the New Testament.

> If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. (I. St. John v, 16, 17).

Other passages which emphasise the nature of sinful acts which have come to be called mortal are as follows:

> Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. (I. Corinthians vi, 9-11).

> And you did he quicken, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins. (Ephesians ii, 1.)

> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life. (St. John iii, 14, 15.)

On the other hand, the following passages would appear to refer to sinful acts which may be called venial:

> For in many things we all stumble. If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also. (James iii, 2.)

> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (I St. John, i, 8.)

The real difficulty here is that of defining the circumstances under which the same sinful act may be mortal or venial. Dr. Kirk affirms that

> "There is no final criterion of mortal and venial sin."[1]

This is in harmony with St. Augustine's statement:

> "What those sins are which exclude from the kingdom of God, it is most difficult to determine and most dangerous to assign."[2]

The difficulty is less serious if we remember the distinction already drawn between sin and personal guilt. When the moral theologian speaks of mortal sin, he is thinking of a sinful act involving such a measure of

[1]K. E. Kirk: *Some Principles of Moral Theology*, p. 251.
[2]Quoted by H. Davis: *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, Vol. I, p. 21

personal guilt on the part of the sinner that it can be truly said that he deliberately separates himself from God, knowingly rejects His love, and consciously refuses to acknowledge the obligations which follow from the fact that he is God's child.[1]

Those who regard the distinction between venial and mortal sin as dangerous are afraid that it will cause people to make light of venial sin. This objection is not without force. Carelessness in small matters may well indicate an attitude towards God and man far removed from the Christian standard of love. We may recall that the saints are penitent for sins of which the rest of us are hardly aware. At this point it will be convenient to examine the generally accepted theories regarding mortal and venial sin as found in the developed moral theology of the Roman Catholic Church. The reader will bear in mind that these theories are designed to *assess guilt;* they are apt to appear rigid and unreal to those who regard sin as an infection rather than as a breach of law.

The three conditions which make a sinful act mortal are: (1) Gravity of matter; (2) Full advertence in a grave matter; (3) Full and free consent of the will.

1. *Gravity of Matter.* There are in the New Testament beginnings of attempts to draw up catalogues of sins in which there is gravity of matter; such

[1]It may be argued that mortal sin, in this sense, is very rare. It is probably true that an absolute and deliberate rejection of God by one who is fully conscious of its consequences is not common. On the other hand, there is a vast difference between a sinful act, committed deliberately, after consideration, with a full knowledge that it is sinful, and the sins of one who is endeavouring to conquer sin and does not act in deliberate defiance of the will of God. In theory, the distinction between mortal and venial sin appears to be clear-cut and definite; in practice, it is a rough and ready discrimination between acts involving more or less guilt because they are more or less deliberately committed.

attempts have been made repeatedly in the history of the Church (*Cf.* Romans I. 20; I Corinthians VI, 9; Galatians V, 19). In mortal sin man places himself, as it were, in a position of enmity to God and man. Nevertheless, even when moral theology is most rigidly formal, there is always a recognition that, for the purposes of *assessing the guilt of the individual* (though not the objectiveness of his sin), his motive is of ultimate importance. If, for example, a boy steals a trifling sum of money with the intention of grievously hurting his parents, the evil motive would make the act of theft, in itself insignificant, mortal. (Our Civil Law recognises this in certain cases: not all killing is murder.) In other words, the *guilt* of a sinful act can only be judged in relation to the psychological condition of the sinner at the moment when the sin is committed, although, clearly, that condition will largely depend upon *previous* psychological conditions, especially those which have become habitual. For example, the law may not consider that a particular fatal accident, due to careless driving, is murder. But careless driving may well be an indication of a self-centred disregard of God and man, and so evidence of a far more definite separation from God than that of an actual murderer.

2. *Full advertence in a grave matter.* A mortally sinful act can be committed only by one who is fully conscious, who is in possession of his reason, and who realises that what he is doing is contrary to God's will for him in so far as he knows it. Here again it is necessary to stress the importance of the distinction between sin and individual guilt. If a theocentric

view of sin be taken, it is clear that sin has an objective gravity which no circumstance can alter. On the other hand, a man is not deliberately cutting himself off from God in wilful disobedience when he commits an act—sinful in itself—which he does not know to be contrary to God's will, although he will be incapable of *full fellowship* with God till he knows and repents of his unconscious sin.

3. *Full and free consent of the will.* This is perhaps the most important point of the three. The root of sin is to be traced to a disordered will, and in assessing the seriousness of the guilt of a sinful act it is necessary to know how far the act is in accordance with the general tendency of a person's life. It is not the sinful act, in itself, which separates us from God, but the personal refusal to live as the Father would have His child live. The pastor must therefore endeavour to discover how far the sinful act is an indication of a personality turned or turning from God. Ruysbroeck's answer to the priests who came to him for advice is well known: "You are as holy as you wish to be." The guilt of our sinful acts is in proportion to the degree in which we accept the sin willingly, having chosen that way of conduct as distinct from another because it best suits the general tendency of our personality. In experience we know these moments of clear refusal to follow God's way: of deliberate rejection of the promptings of conscience; and it is clear that sins so committed are the occasions of a much more definite turning from God than are those which we commit without full deliberation.

In this connexion, we shall remember our Lord's

warning in the Sermon on the Mount, that a sinful desire deliberately held in consciousness, even if unfulfilled, is equivalent to the sinful act itself.

Mortal sin, then, is a sin unto death, leading directly to spiritual death, because it is a deliberate turning from God. Venial sin is a hindrance to our growth into perfect relationship with God, but not a deliberate turning from God; a separation of ourselves from Him.

In the teaching of the schools, sins are venial when there is (1) parvity of matter; (2) incomplete advertence; (3) imperfect consent of the will.

1. *Parvity of matter.* It is suggested, for example, that whereas the stealing of a large sum of money would be a mortal sin, the stealing even of a penny might be *materially* mortal sin but *formally* venial sin. There seems to be some danger, in this teaching of disregarding the true nature of sin. In the instance given earlier in this chapter, it is clear that the *guilt* involved in a theft does not depend upon the amount stolen so much as upon the degree of turning from God of which the stealing is the outcome.
2. *Incomplete advertence.* Incomplete advertence involves either an unenlightened conscience, or a condition of mind and body such as that produced by sleep or drugs when the sinner is not fully aware of the sinfulness of his sin. But my failure to realise the seriousness of what I do *may* be due to a blindness of conscience, for which continued and deliberate wrong choices are responsible. It is clear also that a condition produced by sleep or drugs *may* be due to previous sin, although there are possible cases, such

as those introduced by drugs given in illness, when there is no direct personal responsibility.

3. *Imperfect consent of the will.* It is clear that if I commit a sinful act without the full consent of my will, perhaps when my intention is to do right, it is not the result of a deliberate turning from God, and so, *as guilt,* far less serious.

It is recognised that continuance in venial sin may lead to mortal sin. Venial sin tends to the development of wrong sentiments, or at any rate to the weakening of right sentiments, as well as to the building up of habits which lead to mortal sin. The priest who is accustomed to hear many "confessions of devotion" may well be anxious when the same venial sins are confessed time after time, with no evidence of efforts to amend, and little realisation of the seriousness of such failure. It is a sign of growth when such a soul begins to hate these imperfections as much as others hate mortal sin.

Emphasis is sometimes laid upon the injury which sin does to God, over and above the damage it inflicts upon society and the sinner himself. It is indeed true that the essence of sin is pride: man's setting of his will in opposition to the holy and righteous Will of the loving Father and Lord of the universe: sin is the creature's attempt to contravene the Creator's law. But since the Will of God for the human race is the establishment of His sovereignty in every department of human life, and in all the relationships of men and women with one another, human sin necessarily has a social reference, and expresses itself in terms of these relationships. No doubt we must recognise the possibility of sin in creatures higher in the scale of being than man; and no doubt

Robinson Crusoe could sin. But, with these provisos, it is true that I can only sin against God by sinning against man. My sins against man *are* sins against God: the measure of my neglect of human relationships is the measure of my sinfulness; and I can only express my penitence for my sins against God by a change in my attitude towards men.

Evil thoughts are sometimes adduced as evidence of the possibility of sin which does not affect anyone but the sinner. The argument could only be sustained on the assumption that evil thoughts have no effect on the sinner's own character.

We may now consider the more obvious effects of sin upon the sinner and society.

1. The social effect of certain sins is obvious. The dishonesty and self-seeking of a financier may break up the lives of thousands of people. The indiscipline of a priest may injure many whom he will never know. There is indeed no such thing as an individual sin, in the sense that it is the concern of the sinner alone. If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. It follows from this that we owe confession and restitution to the Church, the family of God of which we are part and which we have injured.
2. Sin, because it involves disorder of the personality, must result in mental conflict.

"We may assume that every individual is in some degree a sinner, with a character not wholly unified by love of the highest. This can only mean that there are sentiments wrongly formed in his life, attached to wrong objects, and destroying the unity of his personality. The inevit-

able result will be an inner conflict, upon the issue of which the real achievement of his life depends."[1]

The sinner is therefore unable to achieve unity of personality and so fails to find well-being. It might possibly be argued that a personality may be unified by adopting a whole-hearted egotism—a perfect self-love. But such a man would be less than a person—would, in fact, be spiritually dead. Personality involves relationship, and relationship involves some measure of altruism. It is impossible to resolve mental conflict by adopting an entire egotism, and anything less than entire egotism must of necessity fail.

There are those, again, who would teach that unity of personality can be achieved by accepting, unreservedly, an ideal of service to humanity. Such is the teaching of the New Humanism—teaching derived, of course, from Christianity. But this, too, must fail, because man is related not only to humanity but to God. The teaching of the mystical writers, that man possesses a spark of God in his soul, is true to experience. He is a son of God, and can only develop full personality in relationship with both God and man.

It follows that there must always be "disorder" until man is unified by the ideal of the Love of God, and that there must be some measure of conflict until this is achieved. Sin prevents this unification, and so hinders man from attaining well-being.

3. Sin must always involve, in some measure, alienation from God. A man, by wilful sin, deliberately refuses

[1]L. W. Grensted: *Psychology and God*, p. 149.

to acknowledge the consequences of his relationship to God, and in doing so separates himself from God. The Prodigal Son could not destroy the essential relationship which existed between himself and his father, but he chose deliberately to separate himself from him.

Unconscious sin, *i.e.*, "material" sin, whatever may be the gravity of the individual's guilt, also involves man in separation from God. The Elder Brother in the parable was not conscious of the fact that he was separated from his father as completely as was the younger. He was to learn that when the younger returned. As we have seen, the men who crucified Christ needed forgiveness, though they were ignorant of the sin which they were committing.

It is clear that, although a man by sin separates himself from God, he cannot destroy his essential relationship to God, or God's desire for fellowship with him.

Forgiveness of sins is essentially the restoration of the sinner to that Fellowship of which he has deprived himself, or has been deprived. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the father's act of forgiveness was the welcoming of the son back into the fellowship with himself and the family from which he had chosen to separate himself: the re-establishment of a fellowship which should always have been the continuous expression of his relationship to the father. It is important to stress this conception of forgiveness, because the word "forgiveness" is used very carelessly. The person who says "I forgive you, but things can never be the same again between us" is an example of a lack of comprehension of the true nature of forgiveness.

It is clear, then, that God is always ready to forgive, but that the sinner cannot be forgiven until he is forgive-

able. The step to be taken by the sinner is that of a change of mind, a turning from himself to God, which is repentance; without this change of mind there can be no forgiveness. The Lord's Prayer makes it clear that this turning to God is expressed by a change in his relationship with human persons. God's forgiveness depends upon our forgiveness of others.

> "Only one petition in the Lord's Prayer has any condition attached to it: it is the petition for forgiveness: and the condition attached to it is this. No doubt if by repentance we mean all that the word means in the New Testament, it will include a forgiving spirit; for to repent is to change one's outlook and to regard men and the world as God regards them. But everyone can feel that the emphasis would be quite different if the words were: 'Forgive us our trespasses, for we do truly repent of them.' This would be like saying: 'I am so sorry: and I won't do it again: do forgive me.' In other words, the plea for forgiveness would rest on an apology and a promise made to God: and this is not the basis on which our Lord bids us rest our plea. It is to rest on our attitude, not towards God, but towards His other children. He is always ready and eager to forgive: but how can He restore us to the freedom and intimacy of the family life if there are other members of the family towards whom we refuse to be friends?"[1]

The motive which brings the sinner to his senses may be imperfect; perhaps, in the early stages of spiritual growth, it always is so: perhaps no more than the fear of the consequences of continued wrong-doing, or remorse, a regretfulness that he has been so foolish. This is called *attrition*, and if it brings us to God in humble confession of our

[1]W. Temple: *Personal Religion and the Life of Fellowship*, p. 46.

blindness and foolishness, He supplies that which is lacking in our repentance. *Contrition,* on the other hand, springs from a love of God, a realisation that sin, in injuring not only oneself and society, has injured God. Contrition, in this sense, is probably very rare, and is a precious thing. In a later chapter, when these matters are discussed in relation to the actual administration of the Sacrament of Penance, we shall see that contrition must not be thought of chiefly as a "feeling," but as a realisation of the seriousness and hatefulness of sin and a determination to live differently in the future.

The second step in that process which we call repentance will be the acknowledgment to God and man that we have sinned and therefore caused them injury: this is *confession.* The readiness to acknowledge the injury our sin has done to God and man is an essential factor in our forgiveableness, which alone can lead to restoration to fellowship with them. We easily accept this in regard to God; we do not realise so readily that we owe confession to man. But we have injured the family by our sin; we must be prepared, in detail so far as we are able, to acknowledge the fact. In the Sacrament of Penance we make this confession to the Church in the person of the priest, her appointed representative. Whenever possible, unless by so doing he should add injury to injury, the sinner must be prepared to acknowledge his sin also to any person directly affected by it.

There are those who suggest that a detailed confession of sin is unnecessary. If one is penitent, they say, and comes to the Father acknowledging one's sinfulness in general terms, that is sufficient. It is argued that in the case of the Prodigal Son his general confession "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be

called thy son" was accepted by the father. It is said that God knows our sins and that the recital of them is unnecessary. This is true, but if the argument were pressed it could be made to apply equally well to detailed intercession. Moreover, a detailed acknowledgment is of great psychological value: the sinner who confesses his sin in detail has got beyond a vague sense of sinfulness. And, finally, the priest is unable to arrive at a sound judgment, or to give informed counsel and advice, unless he knows the facts.

Confession must be accompanied by a real desire for amendment, and a willingness if possible to make restitution. The sinner is not forgiveable, even if he confesses sins both to God and man, unless he has a sincere purpose to amend.

Moral theologians are accustomed to distinguish between two kinds of punishment, eternal and temporal. Eternal punishment, or hell, is the pain of being shut out for ever from fellowship with God. If man is in any real sense free, we must admit the possibility of his rejection of God's love, even to the end, when he becomes incapable of realising it, and is thus deprived of all hope of fellowship with God. This eternal "punishment" is the inevitable consequence of sin, rather than a penalty inflicted from outside. God's forgiveness includes remission of "eternal" punishment; but, once more, this remission must not be conceived of in terms of the law court.

By temporal punishment is meant the natural consequences of sin. It is a fact of experience that forgiveness does not save us from these: an obvious example is the case of the man who has injured his health by some excess, and suffers for life as a result. But forgiveness—restoration to fellowship with God—will give the repentant

sinner strength and courage to bear the natural and inevitable consequences of his sin: and indeed, if his repentance is real, he will not necessarily desire to escape these consequences, but will seek to use them as a means of growth towards a real hatred of sin and love of holiness.

PART II

THE PRIEST'S MINISTRY TO THE INDIVIDUAL

CHAPTER I

THE TRAINING OF THE PRIEST

WE have already referred in the opening pages of this book to the exacting and varied demands made by the priesthood and to the special difficulty of the priest's ministry to individuals. It is plain, and experience of the ministry serves only to make it plainer with every year that passes, that the priest needs all the training he can get to equip him for his work. It is not enough to have received priest's orders. The art of the spiritual physician must be learned. Ignorant bungling in the cure of souls is no more excusable than in the work of the physician and the surgeon. In this chapter we shall survey briefly the principal ways in which the training of the priest for his private ministrations may be furthered.

The claims of the ministry are such that the priest has to make up his mind from the start that he must never cease to learn. There is no ready-made outfit for the physician of souls. Only the beginning of training for this work can be given at the university and the theological college, as every newly ordained clergyman quickly realises, although unfortunately he sometimes fails to draw the obvious moral from the lessons taught him by his early efforts in the cure of souls. Every year of practical experience of the ministry should make the priest more competent, as he widens his knowledge of his people's needs and tests the resources he already has. Yet he will

still need the help of books and of systematic refresher courses in clergy schools, retreats, and other means of intensive study and renewal. Many priests must have felt that they would be very glad if they could go back to a theological college for a term or two after some years of direct experience of pastoral work. The liberally endowed College of Preachers at Washington is an institution which ought to be found in England, but at present is not; and there is a growing need for some kind of "staff college" for the clergy. The work of the spiritual physician needs repeated opportunities for further research and instruction beyond the preliminary training whereby the qualification to practice is obtained.

There is a close analogy here between the priest and the medical man. The general practitioner who is not content merely to jog along and make a living, but is genuinely interested in the art of medicine, will be found giving up some of his holiday to revisit a hospital, and he will keep in touch with medical literature and with the new discoveries and advances in his craft. By so doing he greatly enriches his usefulness and competence, and the lessons of clinical experience learnt by daily contact with his patients are the better appreciated in the light of his theoretical studies. A similar programme suggests itself for the priest. The fruitful combination of work among the people—the analogue of the physician's clinical work—with theoretical study must be the general scheme of the priest's lifelong pursuit of pastoral efficiency.

It is essential that the priest should make his theological studies the first claim upon his time. The difficulty of finding time for reading is real enough, especially in these days of enormous and inadequately staffed parishes; but for his work's sake the priest must see his obligations in

the right proportion and must guard some part of his mornings for reading. Books can be obtained with great ease, and the priest with limited money for book-buying can draw upon the National Library for Students, the County Library Service, and many other sources for the loan of books. Much can be done even by the busiest priest if he cultivates the art of using half hours, and makes it a point of duty always to have some book on hand.

A survey of the principal lines of the priest's training will show that they are roughly fourfold.

1. *The Personal Factor.*

It is necessary to begin by considering the fact that each priest is an individual person with his own separate individuality and limitations. In this highly personal ministry we cannot overlook the problem of this personal factor, and due allowance has to be made for the immense variation in personal endowment which makes some men less suitable than others for a successful ministry to individuals. Some men undoubtedly are better equipped by temperament and disposition for winning the confidence of others and giving them spiritual aid in forms that they can assimilate. They have "a way with them," as some physicians have the "bedside manner." No amount of training will make all priests equal in this respect. Intimate dealings with men and women in their religious and moral lives might plausibly be held to be work for a minority of specially gifted men, with the result that many of the clergy are disinclined to educate themselves for this side of their ministerial work.

Yet the clergy as a body are concerned with this work, and every clergyman must be prepared, whether he likes it

or not, to undertake it to some extent. It is therefore important to realise that nurture as well as nature has a part to play; it is even more important to remember that we ought not to allow the personality of the priest to loom too large in this matter. It is certainly the priest's business to consecrate and train all the gifts he has for this service; but he must constantly remind himself that it is the Holy Spirit, not himself, who is the principal agent in the work. The more he can diminish reliance on himself and dependence on his personal qualities, the better it will be. The priest who by exploiting his own powers of attraction draws a following of admirers round him is not always doing good service to the cause of religion. He must ever point others away from himself to Christ, and deliberately hold himself detached and maintain a prudent reserve; otherwise he is in danger of causing shipwreck both to his own religious integrity and to that of his followers.

Again, it is necessary to insist that tact and its allied qualities are virtues to be acquired, not ready-made endowments, like black hair or a prominent nose, which a man either has or has not. Tact is really a manifestation of Christian *agape*; it is that readiness to see another's point of view, that ability to enter, by sympathy and goodwill, into another man's mind and meet him half-way which comes from a loving regard for the personality of another, and the desire to help him in the way he can most effectively receive help. The tactless man conveys counter-suggestions which fight against his efforts to be of service, because he is still locked up in his egoism, and therefore weak in the virtue of charity. Doubtless some men are, or seem to be, unteachable in this respect through an innate or acquired lack of sensitiveness and imaginative power. They seem to identify fidelity to

principle with the alienation of others. But it is also true that most of us, if we exercise the virtue of humility, can by the grace of God, through self-examination and self-discipline, greatly strengthen our powers of tactful and ready sympathy, our understanding of others and ability to enter into their minds; we can acquire that prudence which saves us from defeating our good intentions through a blundering insensitiveness or the dominating temper which springs from an undisciplined selfwill.

Two dangers and failures are to be avoided here. No priest should rely too much on a naturally expansive and friendly disposition, or think it enough to carry him through as a physician of the soul; and no priest should resign himself to incompetence in personal dealings on the ground that he is not "made that way." There is, of course, always room for the specially gifted and highly-trained director of souls; most of all is such a man needed to deal with persons far advanced in spirituality, or again with people in abnormal psychological conditions. But more necessary for the life of the Church is a competent body of skilled general practitioners in the cure of souls; and that is what the main body of the clergy are called upon to be.

2. *Technical Equipment.*

The foundation of the priest's technique in this ministry is a firm basis of Biblical and dogmatic theology. Without that the superstructure will be rickety and amateurish, and the priest will be at the mercy of every fashion of intellectual charlatanry. A priest of the Church is not a free-lance mind doctor, living by his wits and a ready tongue; he is a minister of Christ, applying the saving Gospel as a wise physician to the healing of men's souls. He must therefore bring his work as spiritual director

into the closest relationship with his theology, and see for himself the relevance of the New Testament and of orthodoxy to the permanent needs of mankind.

This means more than a year or two devoted to G.O.E. It means constant study of the Bible and of theological literature, both at the study table and in the oratory, or wherever the priest makes his meditations. We shall have more to say later of the need for habitual mental prayer in relation to the work of the physician of the soul. Theological study is equally necessary. It has, of course, an obvious value for the purpose of dealing with the questions and intellectual difficulties which individuals will bring to the priest. But its main value lies deeper. It gives the priest an increasingly firm and solid intellectual basis for his work. It prevents him from staleness in his teaching, or from a too subjective and emotional presentation of religion. It keeps him from that distressingly half-baked condition of mind in which he feels that he ought to be able to resolve a problem presented to him and is "gravelled for lack of matter." The priest may well apply von Hügel's famous analysis of religion into an intellectual, a moral, and a mystical element to his own needs, and consider that it points him to a wholeness and unity of personality for the purpose of his vocation as a priest, without which his dedication to God's service and his joy in it can never be complete. The priest is bound to be able to give a reason for the faith that is in him, for he is constantly questioned on the point, or confronted with challenges to the faith which he cannot afford to let go by default. Mere affirmation and the repetition of unthought-out formulas and clichés will only make matters worse, for they bring contempt both upon the Faith and upon its defenders.

It would be a useful exercise for a priest to ask himself whether, for example, he could write down in non-technical language what precisely the Doctrine of the Atonement means to him, and exactly what difference the death of Jesus Christ makes in his everyday life. If a priest is to have something real to say to the individuals who come to him, he must win it by unceasing activity of mind and spirit in the things of God.

To a knowledge of Biblical and dogmatic theology the priest will have to add some competence in moral and ascetic theology. The Anglican priest is not too well provided with books on these subjects, though we may mention with due honour the admirable series of works by Dr. Kirk, and Fr. Harton's useful book. Most of the available books on moral theology are of Roman Catholic origin and have a cut-and-dried rigidity which suits the Roman theory of authority better than the Anglican, with its greater regard for the authority of the individual conscience in the sphere of morals. It is one of the purposes of the present volume to make some contribution to Anglican moral theology, especially in the theory and practice of the confessional, which will do justice to the great merits of the existing body of works on moral theology, but will use them with freedom and with due regard for the Anglican *ethos*.

What that *ethos* is we can perhaps apprehend better than we can express it in words. It is the positive attempt to combine authority with freedom; definiteness with a wide and charitable sympathy; clear-cut conviction, with an acute perception of our human limitations, and of the infinite delicacy of handling human souls. It dislikes rigid systematisation in the realm of the spirit, not because it distrusts rational thought, but because it respects

freedom. It lays little stress on forensic terms and authoritarian legislation, preferring the way of persuasion and appeal to any regimentation of souls. It is not badly expressed in the *mot* of the good Bishop who preferred to see England free to England sober. The Roman account of Christian conduct and duty is admirably systematic, but it often leans heavily to the side of authoritarian legalism, at the expense of freedom and spontaneity in the Christian life. As things are, therefore, the Anglican priest will make himself acquainted with some standard Roman treatise, such as Lehmkuhl in Latin or Davis in English, and use it with discretion as a starting point rather than as a final authority.

Mystical theology does not present the same problem, for there are abundant works on the subject which are classical documents of the spiritual life for all Christians. Very little adjustment to Anglican needs is required in studying St. Francis de Sales or St. John of the Cross, to mention but two writers of the Roman communion whom every priest of the English Church should read.

Some study of psychology is essential. The present condition of psychology, considered as an ordered body of scientific knowledge, is perhaps rather confused, and the priest must walk warily. Probably psychology, like medicine, is and must always be, rather an art than a science. But there is much to be learnt from a discriminating and critical study of the main schools of psychological thought. The priest will do well, for example, to have a working knowledge of the phenomena of instinct, and of the formation of sentiments; and he should get some idea of the relation between sub-conscious psychic activity and the troubles and difficulties which afflict those who come to him. He ought, too, to be able to distinguish between

sin and moral disease, and to recognise the signs of conditions which call for expert psychological treatment. Much harm may be done by ignorant handling of persons suffering from anxieties, scruples, fears, doubts, and so on. The priest without specialist training should not himself undertake analysis (in the technical sense) or the specific work of the medical psychologist; but he ought to be sufficiently equipped with psychological knowledge to work with the physician in such cases, to recognise them when they occur, and to deal himself with the incipient stages of trouble which may lead to psycho-neurotic illness. A fuller treatment of this subject will be found later in this book.

3. *Personal Religion.*

No priest is fit to minister to other souls unless he has both a theoretical and a practical knowledge of prayer and the spiritual life. This will include mystical theology. The study of mystical theology has not at first sight the same everyday utility as the study of moral and ascetic theology, which is necessary for competent treatment of the ordinary Christian in his daily needs. Nor is it to be expected that every parish priest should himself be a mystic, or advance to the heights of contemplative prayer. But he ought at least to have a theoretical knowledge of the ways of advanced prayer and know, as it were, the geography of the country: for he may at any moment be called upon to help someone whose spiritual life is mystical in character, and whose walk with God in contemplative prayer he must not thwart by ignorance.

It may be taken for granted the the priest will pray; what is not always so certain is that he informs his prayer-life and makes it deepen and grow by using the accumulated

wisdom available to him in the writings of the masters of the spiritual life. The first essential after his own daily practice of prayer is that the priest should acquaint himself with the classical literature of devotion outside the Bible. Freedom in prayer is a precious thing, but it is foolish to neglect the guidance of the saints. The priest himself will benefit by studying the science and art of prayer as it has been shaped in the Christian centuries: and he has no business to instruct others simply on the basis of his own limited experience. Spiritual reading will assist him greatly in his own mental prayer, which should rank with the Eucharist and his daily office as a main component of his prayer-life. It is by mental prayer that the priest explores the spiritual world for himself, and verifies in his own experience the truths about God's dealing with the souls of men which it is his mission to proclaim. By it he also secures himself from formality in his daily use of the liturgical prayer of the Church, for the liturgy, which otherwise might grow stale by constant repetition, becomes inexhaustively rich and ceaselessly satisfying as the priest's meditations show him more and more of its meaning.

Spiritual reading and mental prayer combined will also equip the priest to deal with the practical difficulties of prayer which are sure to be brought to him. He must know how to deal with the common troubles of dryness, lack of concentration, desire for sensible devotion, and the hindrances to prayer set up by sin, ignorance, or unresolved complexes. Both by his own wrestling with such difficulties in his personal life of prayer, and by learning how better men than himself have dealt with them, he will be able to help others along the road. He will learn how to diagnose the spiritual needs of individuals and

to suggest the mode of prayer suited to different types of mind.

If he is to prepare others for a first confession, and himself to deal with penitents in the confessional, it is obvious that he must himself have experience of this means of grace, whatever his own views of its place in the Christian life generally may be. It is difficult to see how any priest of the Church of England can refuse to hear a confession and give absolution, in view of what the Prayer Book has to say on the matter: and if he has to use this ministry for others he ought at least sometimes to use it for himself. Ignorant and second-hand treatment of so sacred a ministry as that of absolution should be an intolerable thought.

The priest's spiritual life should be under some kind of rule, for he ought to know the value of order as well as the value of freedom in his devotions. A rule of intercession, meditation, daily office, confession, communion, retreat, spiritual reading and special (*e.g.*, Lenten) exercises, drawn up with care and reasonableness, and kept without pharisaic pedantry but with conscientious loyalty will give the priest both stability and freedom in his spiritual life. The rule should be revised from time to time, preferably during the priest's annual retreat.

4. *The Cultural Background.*

We have been outlining what may be called the "professional" training of the priest, but in doing so we have not forgotten for a moment that the priest must be more than a professional. There are several reasons which make it necessary to insist on this point.

For one thing, the priesthood is more than a professional career, and though the exercise of ministerial functions

may lapse with age or infirmity no priest worth his name would regard his priesthood as ended when he ceased to make his living by it. But no one would think any the less of a solicitor or a stockbroker if they openly rejoiced on retirement in the thought that they would never see the inside of an office again. But in this context we are more concerned with another reason.

The priest is dealing with lay people whose education and experience of life give them little or no knowledge of the specialised language of ecclesiastics, and who have a not unnatural suspicion of "priestcraft." Spiritual pedantry is a real danger, and in one form or another often causes grave harm to the cause of religion. It is perfectly true—and this book could not have been written if the authors were not convinced that it is true—that the well-intentioned but untrained and unskilled amateur is quite unable to do the work of a priest properly. Yet the modern priest badly needs some of the qualities which in an easier and less complicated age were often the distinguishing marks of his predecessors. The wide, general culture and genial humanity of the best type of old-fashioned English clergyman were extremely valuable assets of the priesthood, and though they will not by themselves suffice, it must be said that the clergy seriously weaken their position and influence if they are to be no longer men of cultivation and wide reading. We have happily got away from the days when the clergy were drawn from one stratum of society, but it would be a calamity if that were to mean that Christian humanism ceased to be a clerical ideal. The priest who has to move in all circles and to know all kinds of people needs more than a professional manner. The "more" does not consist in pure scholarship—though the larger the number of

scholar-priests the better—but rather in that breadth of mind and cultivation of intelligence and taste which are the marks of the educated man. The training of the modern priest cannot be said to be complete unless this side of it is included.

The process of training, whose main branches have just been outlined, will begin with the university and the theological college, and will be continued in the priest's study, in his church, and in his daily intercourse with his people. A word may be added about certain special aids which he may use.

Agencies for promoting common study among the clergy are numerous and leave no excuse for ignorance on the ground that help and encouragement in reading are wanting. The Way of Renewal and the Central Society for Sacred Study will give help all the year round. Then the priest should make it a fixed annual engagement to attend his diocesan school for the clergy. The junior clergy should receive special help from their ecclesiastical superiors. It is most desirable that in every diocese the Bishop should require the attendance of deacons and young priests at special continuation schools, held once or twice a year, and that for the first three years at least of their ministry the newly-ordained clergymen should read under the general supervision of the Bishop's examining chaplains. The building up of a library should be one of the ordinand's deliberate resolutions as he prepares for his ministry. Reading should not be desultory or unplanned, and the guidance given to the junior clergy, together with the help of Way of Renewal circles, and groups using the Central Society's syllabuses, will provide the clergyman with the means of orderly study, which he should never allow himself to abandon.

Lastly, in his annual retreat the priest will review his personal life and his priestly efficiency, and in the silence of those precious hours renew his vision and his dedication.

CHAPTER II

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

SIN, as we have seen, involves the separation of the sinner from God and from God's Family, which is the Church. Sin has deprived man of that fellowship with God and with the Church which is his chief good, and which should be the natural consequences of his relation to God. This separation is the one great evil from which all men suffer, and from which comes all else which mars the value of life. Vastly more important than any other problem which faces the world is the question: How can man be reconciled to God and to his fellows?

This is not the place to discuss in detail the several theories of the Atonement. For our purpose it is sufficient to accept the teaching of the New Testament that it is God's will to reconcile man to Himself by Jesus Christ. "He died that we might be forgiven"; and God has committed to the Church, which is the Body of Christ, the Ministry of Reconciliation. (II Cor. V, 18).

The essence of reconciliation is to be found in the forgiveness of sin and in all that this implies. Of recent years so much emphasis has been laid upon our Lord's work as Teacher that we are in danger of forgetting this aspect of His Ministry; yet it is of primary importance. In dealing with individuals He made it clear that forgiveness was the one thing needful above all else: restoration to fellowship, reconciliation with God and with the Church. Our Lord was sent into the world to win man to forgiveness, and this

same commission He has handed on to the Fellowship of Christians. "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." In order that they may discharge their great responsibility, He gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit. *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.* They are not to act in their own strength; they are to be instruments of the Spirit by whom Christ continues His work of reconciliation. It is by the gift of the self-same Spirit that the successors of the Apostles hand the Christ-given commission to each priest to-day: "Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a priest in the Church of God now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven: and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained."

> "Thus the Lord ended His Ministry by delegating to His Church the authority which at the beginning of the ministry He had claimed for Himself as Son of Man (Mark II, 10). In the Old Testament to forgive sins is reserved for God in Heaven. (1 Kings VIII, 39.) But since the Incarnation it has been exercised on earth—in the first instance by Our Lord as Man, . . . and, after His resurrection and ascension, by men, who are members of His Body and partakers of His Spirit."[1]

Every priest, therefore, is sent by Christ to reconcile men to God and to the Church by leading them to repentance; to that change of outlook which makes them capable of forgiveness and restoration to fellowship with God and His Family. This is the primary task of the clergy. They must not forget this: they must never think

[1] H. B. Swete in *Report of a Conference at Fulham Palace*, p. 4.

of parish work merely in terms of services taken or of social activities and ministrations. These things are essential, but there is required in addition to them a real desire to save those who are out to touch with God and with the Fellowship of Christ, not merely because they may be in danger of spiritual death, but even more because they are part of the riches of the glory of God's inheritance, of which He must not be deprived.

The Life of the Curé d'Ars is the story of a pastor who had such a passion for souls; would that all priests could emulate him in this respect. "My God," he said, "grant me the conversion of my parish. I am willing to suffer everything Thou willest all the days of my life—yea for a hundred years, the most grievous pangs—if only my people be converted."

Henri Gheon writing of him says:

> "A saint is never broad-minded. A saint never compromises. Tender of conscience for himself, he is equally tender for others. He does not think that the word 'indulgence' covers everything, for sin is sin. Others speak of it; he *sees* it—sees it almost physically, as a devouring leprosy, as the first spark of the everlasting fire. Poor little country priest, had he come to save souls or had he not? Did he love them as his own? With his own soul shivering in his meagre body, do you think that he would let others sleep quiet in false security? He is responsible to God for his flock as he was to his father for the handful of sheep that he used to take out to pasture. And if the full number is not there when evening comes? If a single ewe caught in the brambles suffers through his fault? If truth is inescapable, of what *use* is it to anybody to try to whittle it down?"[1]

[1]H. Gheon: *The Secret of the Curé d'Ars*, p. 43.

The first step in this work of reconciliation is to reveal to men the true nature of sin: to help them to see that it really matters: to aid them in recovering a sense of the urgency of the need to repent. It is, however, true that men will not be won to repentance until they realise their need of it, and this involves a recognition of their need for God. The chief work of the pastor, therefore, is not so much to preach repentance as to proclaim the character and the purpose of Almighty God. Man must be led not only to a belief in the existence of the Supreme Being, but to a Christian conception of the nature of God. God is the Father who loves each child whom He has made, and without whom no man can find the meaning and purpose of life. It may not be easy to believe in the love of God for each individual, but only so can sin be revealed in its true character. Sin indeed, as we have already seen, injures society and prevents the individual from coming into harmony with himself, yet the full horror of it can be realised only when we grasp the fact that it deprives us of fellowship with God. Were experience not to teach otherwise, it would be unbelievable that man, who ceaselessly strives to find love in relation to his fellows, continually crucifies Love, and thereby deprives himself of that for which he longs most deeply.

It is interesting and instructive to consider how the Church faced this task of reconciling the sinner to God. In the early Church there is no trace of any doubt as to the reality of the Apostolic Commission; the only point in question was the possibility of absolving post-baptismal sin. For centuries a battle raged between extreme rigorism on the one hand and a milder interpretation of the Church's Commission to absolve on the other. In the New Testament the rigorist view is found in the Epistle to the

Hebrews. Three times the author of that book says that it is impossible to restore one who has fallen away. (See Hebrews VI, 4-8; X, 26-31; XII, 16-17.) In Hebrews VI, 6 it is plainly stated: "It is impossible to renew them again to repentance"; in X, 26, "There remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins"; and in XII, 17, "He found no place for repentance."

In this connexion attention must be paid to the passage from the First Epistle of St. John (1 St. John V, 16-17) already considered in Chapter III; it concerns the sin unto death. Dr. Kirk holds that although there is here an echo of rigorist discipline, it is also clear that the writer himself is pleading on the liberal side. Kirk concludes that the writer believes (i) that the Christian who sins is no Christian, but (ii) that prayer is efficacious.

> "There *is* a sin unto death, he admits: and for that he cannot encourage his readers to pray. But he hedges this piece of pessimism about with the reiterated assertion that there is *also* a sin not unto death, for which prayer will avail. It is this latter point he wishes to press home, and not the former."[1]

This problem of the reconciliation of the grievous sinner exercised the mind of the Church for centuries. Hermas in *The Shepherd* (A.D. 154), for example, taught "that grave sinners are to be excluded from the Church without hope of re-admission, but that it has been revealed to him that owing to circumstances of the times one repentance is to be allowed: but even so the sins of apostasy, adultery and homicide cannot be absolved." This possibility of a second penance was called by Tertullian,

[1]K. E. Kirk: *The Vision of God*, p. 161.

who echoes this rigorist view, as "the plank in the shipwreck." As time went on, the severity of the Church's discipline was increased rather than relaxed till few were prepared to face it and delayed repentance till the deathbed.

In later years the rigorism increased still further. "Not only before, but even after his reconciliation, the penitent suffered every kind of temporal penalty—so much so that entry into a monastery came to be a recognised (and even preferable) alternative to penance, and evasion by suicide was not unknown."[1] The length of the time of the penance also increased.

> "St. Basil suggests a penance of thirty years for unwitting offences against the seventh commandment: eleven years for unpremeditated homicide; twenty for wilful murder: and lifelong penance for apostasy." [2]

It is true, as Watkins says in *A History of Penance*, that the Church was more concerned with her prerogative of binding than with that of loosing.

In so far as England is concerned, it seems to be clear that the earlier system of penance and reconciliation was not used; this fact marks the end of an important development in the practice of the Church in this regard. At first it was assumed that it was the function of the Bishop to absolve, the priest playing little part in the official reconciliation of sinners. Slowly the priest also came to exercise this ministry. In the Celtic Church in Ireland, which was essentially monastic, and in which the Bishop played a smaller part than the Abbot, this system of confession to a priest rather than a Bishop became the

[1] K. E. Kirk: *The Vision of God*, p 228.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 228.

rule. Moreover it was the usual practice to re-admit penitents publicly to full communion, although it is doubtful if the public confession of sins was ever a general practice. Even the former was lost, however, and the system which has prevailed ever since came into being, namely, private confession to a priest as the representative of the Church.

The Celtic missionaries to England naturally introduced their own system, and St. Augustine does not appear to have brought with him the discipline to which he must have been accustomed. Finally Theodore, by the publication of his Penitential, established the use of the Celtic Church in this country, from whence it spread to the continent, and ultimately to the whole Christian world.[1]

This development of the system of private confession to a priest was completed when at the fourth Council of the Lateran in the reign of Pope Innocent the Third, in 1215, the duty of confessing once a year was laid upon all the faithful, a precept which governed the practice of the whole Western Church until the Reformation.

> "Every *fidelis* of either sex shall after the attainment of years of discretion separately confess his sins with all fidelity to his own priest at least once in the year: and shall endeavour to fulfill the penance imposed upon him to the best of his ability, reverently receiving the sacrament of the Eucharist at least at Easter: unless it happen that by the counsel of his own priest . . . he hold that he should abstain for a time from the reception of the sacrament: otherwise let him during

[1]This is, clearly, an inadequate sketch of a most interesting and important subject. Those who wish to follow it further should read the chapters in Dr. Kirk's *Vision of God* which deal with the history of Penance, and *A History of Penance*, by Watkins, a book which deals with the subject exhaustively.

life be repelled from entering the church, and when dead let him lack Christian burial. Wherefore let this salutary statute be frequently published in the churches, lest any assume a veil of excuse in the blindness of ignorance. But if any desire to confess his sins to an outside priest for some just reason, let him first ask and obtain permission from his own priest, since otherwise he (the outside priest) cannot loose or bind him. But let the priest be discreet and cautious, and let him after the manner of skilled physicians pour wine and oil upon the wounds of the injured man, diligently inquiring the circumstances alike of the sinner and of the sin, by which (circumstances) he may judiciously understand what counsel he ought to give him, and what sort of remedy to apply, making use of various means (*experiments*) for the healing of the sick man. But let him give strict heed not at all to betray the sinner by word or sign or in any other way, but if he need more prudent counsel let him seek it cautiously without any indication of the person: since we decree that he who shall presume to reveal a sin discovered to him in the penitential tribunal is not only to be deposed from the priestly office, but also to be thrust into a strict monastery to do perpetual penance."[1]

The important fact to be grasped here is the tremendous sense of the seriousness of mortal sin which existed in this early period. There was probably some mitigation of discipline, but this in no way lessens the strength of the conception of the grievousness of mortal sin. This is the more evident when it is remembered that there were periods when it was believed to be impossible for the Christian to sin at all, since he was filled with the grace of God—a doctrine which appears in history again and again.

It should not at this time of day be necessary to defend

[1]Watkins: *A History of Penance*, p. 748.

the assertion that the Church of England recognises, and indeed advises the use of the Sacrament of Penance. In the Book of Common Prayer this is made clear in the first long exhortation in the Liturgy, and in the rubrics of the Office for the Visitation of the Sick.

It is not, however, generally recognised how great a volume of evidence exists to show that sacramental confession has been regularly used throughout the period since the Reformation, and that the revival of the Sacrament in our own time is of the nature of an additional emphasis rather than a return to pre-Reformation practice.

The Prayer Book of 1549 was explicit in regard to the use of "Auricular and secret confession to a Priest," meanwhile urging charity on the part of those who do use the sacrament towards those who do not, and *vice versa*. "But in all things to follow and keep the rule of charity, and every man to be satisfied with his own conscience, not judging other men's minds or consciences whereas he hath no warrant of God's word to the same."

It is important, however, to notice that the Book of 1549 made no mention of the Paschal Precept, leaving it to the conscience of the individual whether or not he should use the Sacrament of Penance. This has remained the practice of the English Church.

Auricular Confession is assumed by the 113th Canon of 1603, and in the Visitation Charges of a succession of Bishops (including Bishop Andrewes) from 1619 to 1679 inquiries were made of the clergy concerning the performance of their duty to grant the benefit of absolution to those who come to open their grief to them.

In Dr. Pusey's adaptation of Gaume's *Manual for Confessors*, he quotes the names of thirty-five distinguished

teachers from the great Caroline Divines to John Keble, who bear witness to the Sacrament of Penance.[1]

Dr. Sheppard, in his *Memorials of St. James' Palace* (Volume II, page 299) gives a list of Confessors to the King's Household from 1606 to 1833, when the last was appointed. In 1859 the title lapsed and the priest who succeeded to the office was called "Chaplain of the Palace of St. James."

Nevertheless, in the Prayer Book of 1549, as we have seen, although the faithful were urged to use the Sacra-

[1]Among these names are to be found the following: *Bishop Jewel:* "The abuses and errors set apart, we do no more dislike a 'private confession' more than a 'private sermon'." *Archbishop Ussher:* "Be it known that no kind of confession, either public or private, is disallowed by us, that is in any way requisite for the due execution of that ancient power of the Keys which Christ bestowed upon His Church."

Hooker: "For private confession and absolution it stands thus with us; the minister's power to absolve is publicly taught and professed." *Bishop Andrewes,* commenting on the words "That he may receive . . . the benefit of absolution" wrote: "It is most expedient that this be read, to induce the people that they bethink themselves of the sovereign benefit of absolution by their penitent confession. *George Herbert:* "In his"—i.e., the Parson's—"visiting the sick or otherwise afflicted, he followeth the Church's counsel, viz., in persuading them to particular confession; labouring to make them understand the great good use of this ancient and pious ordinance, and how necessary it is in some cases.

Bishop Jeremy Taylor: "When St. James exhorts all Christians to confess their sins one to another, certainly it is more agreeable to all spiritual ends, that this be done rather to the curates of souls than to the ordinary brethren. The Church of England is in no way engaged against it, but advises it, and practises it." *Bishop Ken* in a *Manual of Prayers* for the use of the boys at Winchester, clergymen and other devout Christians: "I then advise you, as the Church does, to go to one of your Superiors in this place, to be your spiritual guide, and be not ashamed to unburthen your soul freely to him, that, besides his ghostly counsel, you may receive the benefit of absolution." *Bishop Wilson:* "And if my sins are such as give me great disturbance of mind, I will not only confess them to God, but I will apply to some one of those pastors, whom God has appointed to be the ministers of reconciliation betwixt God and man: to him I will open my case and my grief: I will take his ghostly counsel and directions; and when he judges my repentance to be sincere, according to the rules of the Gospel, I will beg of him to give me absolution."

(*Vide* "Advice for those who exercise the Ministry of Reconciliation through confession and absolution," Dr. Pusey, pp. 57-153. *Cf. Hierugia Anglicana* Ed. Vernon Staley, Vol. V, Part III, pp. 31-115.)

ment as a preparation for Holy Communion, there is no mention of the Paschal Precept of the Fourth Lateran Council, and no subsequent Prayer Book has made it part of the practice of the English Church. The question therefore arises, What place should be given to sacramental confession in the teaching of a normal parish? This question becomes of special importance when we consider the preparation of Confirmation candidates, inasmuch as there are certain priests who insist that every candidate shall make his confession before presenting him to the Bishop. Can this be justified?

Those who would refuse to present candidates to the Bishop to be confirmed unless they have made their confession sacramentally are acting on what they claim to be a Scriptural truth, *viz.* that post-baptismal mortal sin can only be absolved by the Sacrament of Penance. It is somewhat startling to find, for example, Slater, the Roman Catholic moral theologian, stating roundly that Our Lord teaches that post-baptismal sin can only be absolved by the sacrament. To come nearer home, we find Belton, in his *Manual for Confessors*, saying:

> "The Sacrament of Penance is necessary, for all who have fallen into mortal sin after Baptism, just as Baptism is necessary for all those who have not yet received it, and are therefore still unregenerate. This is proved by the fact that the sacrament is of Divine institution. It is God's appointed way by which post-Baptismal sin is forgiven, and, if we recognise and believe this, we are guilty of the sin of presumption in vainly trying to find another way—always an easier one—of obtaining forgiveness."

If this teaching is accepted it follows that no priest can be sure that a candidate for Confirmation has been for-

given his sins (*cf.* the Bishop's prayer in the Confirmation Service) unless he or she has used the Sacrament of Penance. The same argument applies, of course, to all those who have committed mortal sin. There are many, therefore, who claim that the point is not whether the Church of England makes Confession compulsory or not, but that Holy Scripture teaches the necessity of sacramental absolution in the case of mortal sin. It is difficult to see how such a position can be defended in the light of such Anglican formularies as have already been quoted.

Again, there are those who would teach that although the Sacrament of Penance has a place in the practice of the English Church, it is only a remedy for serious cases, and should never be allowed to become habitual. Dr. Grensted in his *Psychology and God* writes:

> "Of penance we need only say that its theological significance is bound up with the secondary forensic conception of sin. It has its value in certain cases, but should be used with the strictest discretion, and with due regard to its psychological effects. That God demands or desires it is simply incredible, save in so far as His love must always desire the healing of the soul. And there are cases where a sharp surgery is seen by both priest and penitent to be the way of love."[1]

Once more, there is a position mediating between these two extremes, and it is this which is adopted in this book. We claim that it is the duty of the priest to teach his people the benefits of absolution and of counsel, since for some persons these are essential.[2] Every priest in the

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 156.

[2] On the other hand, he must beware lest confession should become a King Charles's Head to him.

Church of England, by virtue of his office, must be prepared and willing to hear the confessions of his parishioners. Moreover it is surely his duty to see that this is not more difficult than it need be. He should provide regular opportunities whereby the faithful may find him in church ready for this purpose. It is not fair to the penitent to expect him to search out the priest in order to make his confession. On the other hand the clergy have no right virtually to compel people to come to confession. The English Church, rightly or wrongly, throws upon the individual the responsibility of deciding according to his conscience when he should use or not use the Sacrament of Penance.

There are both advantages and disadvantages in this freedom. The chief advantage resides in the fact that, generally speaking, the freedom allowed to the penitent ensures a high standard in those who actually make their confessions. The pastor may sometimes be tempted to wish that he had a greater power to lead people to confession, because it is sometimes evident that the grace of absolution is greatly needed. He may, however, console himself with the reflexion that loss would be greater than gain if the penitent were left without choice in the matter.

It is important to emphasise to the penitent the fact that his sin has injured the Body of Christ, and that he owes it to the Church to make a formal and detailed acknowledgment of his sin. In the English Church a penitent making his first confession has difficulties to face which are not so marked in other communions where confession is the normal practice. The pastor may use this fact to point out to the penitent that confession provides him with an opportunity for a very real act of self-

giving; that in making use of this sacrament he is able in a very small way to share in the pain which his sin has brought to God.

The English Church not only insists upon the value of absolution, but also on that of the "ghostly counsel and advice" which the penitent receives from "the discreet and learned minister of God's Word" to whom he opens his grief. In other words it emphasises the importance of what is technically known as Direction. Unfortunately there is a school of thought in the Church of England which lays so much stress upon the judicial function of the priest that his function as physician and father are forgotten. We must postpone the consideration of direction until a later chapter. Here it is sufficient to say that it is wise not to give lengthy counsel or advice in the confessional as a rule, but the pastor who does not realise its importance and value will fail in his treatment of those sinners to whom he ministers.

As we have seen, the development of the idea of the Sacrament of Penance was gradual, and it was in the work of Schoolmen and later in the Council of Trent that moral theology became fully systematised. The English Church, as such, has contributed but little to this systematisation, and we must turn to the writings of Roman Catholic moral theologians for any clearly formulated theory. Books recently written from the Anglican standpoint have indeed been little but transcriptions from Roman Catholic writers. These writers differ in certain more or less minor matters, but the following brief outline is the view of the theology of the Sacrament of Penance generally accepted by them.

In the Sacrament of Penance, as in that of Holy Matrimony, the matter of the sacrament is not material,

as in the other sacraments, but is provided by the penitent himself.

(*a*) *The nearer matter.* The nearer matter consists of the penitent's contrition, confession and satisfaction. Contrition or attrition is the penitent's firm desire to be reconciled to God, born of his realisation that his sin has separated him from God. Confession is essential because the priest is otherwise unable to judge of the penitence of the sinner, and so to pronounce or to withhold absolution. Satisfaction is that purpose of amendment without which repentance does not exist. It must be accompanied by the readiness to perform the acts of penance laid upon the penitent by the priest, and to make restitution whenever it is required of him and is possible.

(*b*) *The remoter matter.* The remoter matter consists of actual sins committed since baptism, or since the last confession and absolution. A distinction is made between what is called "necessary remote matter" and the "free remote matter." The former consists of mortal sins, the latter of venial. This distinction, as has already been pointed out, is in practice very difficult to make. Moreover, it is doubtful whether from the point of view of the penitent it is a safe distinction, especially when it is remembered that according to Roman teaching venial sins need not necessarily be confessed. It seems better to teach that all sins, however trivial, should be confessed, and that the penitent should not attempt to decide for himself which sins are mortal and which venial. It is common experience that those penitents who are most free from deliberate sin are most conscious of those sins usually accounted venial:

Those who fain would serve Thee best
Are conscious most of wrong within.

A point of some importance arises here relating to one who is being prepared for adult baptism. Should he make his confession before he receives the sacrament? The answer seems to be that he should make his confession, but not receive absolution, this being one of the consequences of his baptism itself. In order that the confession may be valid it should be an entire confession of all sins remembered since absolution was last received. It should as far as possible be definite and detailed. Confessions are sometimes made which are hardly more than a list of sinful tendencies or attitudes of mind. The penitent must make clear the exact nature of the sinful act and the frequency with which it has been committed. There are those who feel that there is danger in a too definite insistence upon a detailed confession giving the actual number of times a sin has been committed. It may degenerate into a mechanical habit of mind in which self-examination becomes a kind of spiritual book-keeping. There is much weight in this objection. It can, however, be met if penitents are taught to say whether a sin has been frequently or only occasionally committed, without being expected to state the actual number of times. There are, of course, certain types of penitent, *e.g.*, the scrupulous, who should be strictly forbidden to mention the number of times. There are extraordinary cases in which the penitent should be excused from any such detailed and specific confession, such as, for instance, the dying, those in accidents, shipwrecks, etc.

The form of the Sacrament of Penance consists of the judicial sentence of the priest, which is pronounced authoritatively by reason of the power bestowed upon him at his Ordination by the Church. The form of absolution prescribed by the Anglican Church is found in the Order

for the Visitation of the Sick, the essential words being: "I absolve thee . . . in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The essence of forgiveness is the restoration of the sinner to that fellowship with God and with the Church of which he has, by his sin, deprived himself. We must consider the relation of absolution to this reconciliation. God is Love, and always desires man to be in fellowship with Himself. In other words there is nothing from God's side, as it were, which hinders this fellowship. It is the sinner who separates himself from God: not God Who separates Himself from the sinner. In order to be forgiven man must repent; in other words, realising his folly (attrition), or realising something of God's love (contrition), he turns from sin towards God. It is repentance which makes him forgivable. It is therefore true to say that God forgives at the very moment when the sinner repents. Forgiveness is thus a state dependent upon man's attitude to God. As we have seen, it involves far more than sorrow for sin (which may be hardly more than remorse); it necessitates a whole-hearted change of mind (μετάνοια).

In the account of the woman "which was a sinner" who anointed our Lord's feet in the house of Simon the Pharisee (St. Luke VII, 37-50) our Lord assures those present that she is forgiven: "wherefore I say unto thee, her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." By reason of her repentance the woman had already returned to fellowship with God. In the following verse our Lord absolves her in the words, "thy sins are forgiven." In other words, in this case absolution follows forgiveness.

The question then arises, Why was this absolution necessary? From God's side, it may be regarded as the

acceptance of the woman's penitence which had won her forgiveness. From the woman's point of view it is the assurance which our Lord gave her of that forgiveness. In like manner the absolution of the priest is God's acceptance of the sinner's repentance following upon confession of sin, and God's assurance to the sinner of that forgiveness. Clearly the absolution of the priest, if he had judged wrongly of the sincerity of the sinner's repentance, could not of itself involve forgiveness.

If this account of the relation between forgiveness and absolution be correct, the question may be asked: "Why, if God forgives me when I am penitent, need I confess my sins to a priest and receive sacramental absolution?" Two things may be said in reply. First, confession and absolution are valuable because it is fitting (having regard to the nature of the Body of Christ) that the sinner should submit his case to the judgment of the Church by making a detailed confession of his sins, and should receive the formal expression of the Church's acceptance of the sinner's repentance. Moreover, absolution is not only a declaration of forgiveness; it also involves a strengthening of the penitent by the power of the Spirit through absolution. Secondly, there is the psychological fact that relief and power follow upon the open acknowledgment of one's sins. This is widely recognised by those who give no place to the Sacrament of Penance in the Christian life. "Confession is good for the soul."

Another question arises. It is easy to imagine a scrupulous penitent finding it impossible to believe in his forgiveness in spite of absolution, since he doubts the reality of his own penitence. In reply, it may be said that the Church has never taught that perfect contrition is necessary for forgiveness; attrition, together with con-

fession and absolution, is sufficient. Provided therefore that the penitent is ready to acknowledge his sin and to purpose amendment, he can be satisfied that his repentance is accepted by God. It may be added that he should be taught to believe in the reality of the gift of the Holy Spirit operating in and through the Sacrament of Penance. He can rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to judge of the sufficiency of his penitence, however inadequate this may seem to him to be, provided he has done all that is in his power to make a good confession.

CHAPTER III

PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

1. *Reasons for the use of Sacramental Confession.*

THERE is no hard-and-fast rule in the English Church which, unlike the Church of Rome, has no Paschal Precept. It is therefore frequently necessary to give reasons to a penitent why he should make use of Sacramental Confession. He may well consider the following points:

(*a*) Many are led to approach the pastor with regard to the Sacrament of Penance because they are conscious of a guilt which has become to them a burden they can no longer bear. They desire above all else to be free from this burden; to re-discover the peace which they have lost. In many cases the pastor will learn of efforts to achieve this sense of forgiveness by private confession of sin to God. In other cases the penitent has been sure of God's forgiveness for a time, but afterwards doubt has returned and peace has been lost. In such cases the pastor's first step is to make clear that in the Sacrament of Penance the sinner may have a concrete objective assurance of forgiveness.[1] He must emphasise that it is rarely safe in matters of religion to depend upon passing thoughts and emotions. More than this is required, and to this end our Lord has given to His Church the authority to absolve, which brings with it objective assurance of forgiveness. There is an obvious analogy in the Sacramental Presence of our

[1]This paragraph of course does not apply to scrupulous penitents.

Lord in Holy Communion. The communicant does not rely upon his "feeling" of our Lord's Presence; his faith rests upon the objective reality of the Sacrament.

(*b*) If the penitent is to grasp this truth he must of course accept the fact of our Lord's commission to the Church, and of His gift of the Holy Spirit in the power of which the Church absolves. It will therefore be necessary to show him the evidence of the New Testament for this commission and this gift. It will also probably be necessary to point out to him the evidence set forth in the last chapter concerning the place given to sacramental confession in the formularies of the English Church.

(*c*) Instruction concerning the evidence upon which the theory of the Sacrament of Penance is based, both in the New Testament and in the Book of Common Prayer, will lead directly to a vital consideration and one which will do much to correct the individualism which is so widespread in the Church. The sinner may have been brought to realise that he could find the assurance of forgiveness for himself by receiving priestly absolution. He must, however, go further than this. He must be brought to see that the confession of his sin is an obligation which he owes to the Church, the society of his baptism. Owing to the weakness of our sense of the corporate nature of the Church, it is not always easy to show a penitent in what way his sin has injured the family of God. When this truth has been grasped, however, it provides a clear reason for the confession of sins to the representative of the Body, namely the priest. Moreover, when we have sinned grievously we must not too lightly assume that the Church will receive us back into the family life until we have submitted our sins to the authority of the Church. This is indeed clear in the case of a "notorious" sin. It

should be equally clear that even sins which are not notorious in the commonly accepted sense of the word are nevertheless injuries to the Divine Society and to some extent separate us from its fellowship.[1]

(*d*) The realisation that the Church is injured by the sins of Christians, and that they need to be reconciled to it, leads naturally to a consideration of the sinner's separation from God and his need of reconcilation with Him. It is true that our conception of sin has been too individualistic, and that we shall recover a more balanced view by emphasising the soldiarity of God's family, but the fact remains that there is a personal relation between the child and the Father, and that our sin hurts God and separates us from His Fellowship. Once the penitent begins to realise the fact that he has hurt God by his sin, he will often desire to express his penitence in the most painful way. To confess our sins privately to God, indeed, should be as difficult as it is to confess them in the presence of a priest—perhaps indeed more so—but the fact remains that this is not the case. Readiness to use the Sacrament of Penance is, therefore, frequently a test of the sincerity of the sinner's penitence. His confession is a natural act of self-humiliation; natural in the sense that nothing less than the sacrifice of pride can sufficiently express real penitence.

(*e*) Finally, something must be said regarding the benefit of "ghostly counsel and advice." We do not expect

[1]The fact that confession is made to the Church and not only to God was made clear in the 1549 Form of the invitation in the People's preparation before Communion—the phrase ran, "make your humble confession to Almightie God, *and to his holy Church here gathered together in hys name*, mekely knelyng upon your knees." (Italics ours.)

In 1552 the words were altered to "*before this congregacion here gathered together in his holy name.*" See *Liturgy and Worship*, p. 333, and an article by the Rev. H. de Candole entitled "The Corporate aspect of the Sacrament of Penance" in *Theology*, Vol. XXVII, No. 162.

a doctor to prescribe a remedy until he has been told the symptoms and thus enabled to diagnose the disease. It is only when the penitent is prepared to lay bare his sins to the priest that he can be expected to discover the roots of his sinfulness and that the appropriate spiritual remedies can be prescribed.

2. *The Penitent's Contrition.*

The first step in the penitent's actual preparation for confession is the adoption of that attitude of mind towards God and towards sin which is called "contrition," or in its imperfect form "attrition."

It must be made clear at the outset that this is not predominantly a "feeling" state. Penitents who are prepared to acknowledge that they have sinned and who purpose amendment are often troubled because they cannot "feel" deep sorrow for their sin. It must be made clear to such persons that contrition depends upon three things.

(*a*) In the first place, there must be a realisation of having sinned by living out of fellowship with God and man. In its less perfect forms such a realisation will be based (as we have suggested by the order in which we have placed the points to be considered by the penitent in the previous section) less on the conception of sin as a rejection of the love of God than on the view of sin as an injuring of the self and of society. The Prodigal Son was apparently led to penitence not so much by a recollection of his father's love as by a realisation of his own foolishness, in that he starved in a foreign land, whereas at home there was plenty: "how many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger." He first of all came to himself; that is, he became conscious of the injury which he had done to himself

by his own foolishness, and this it was which led him to return to his father. Later on he began to realise that he had injured not only himself but also his father, and in his father's welcome he learned more than he had ever known before of the parental love. Remorse, therefore, if it is rightly used, may be the beginning of a discovery of the love of God which will lead to an increasingly deep contrition.

The danger of remorse is that it may lead to despair rather than to confession and to amendment. There may come a moment when the sinner, realising the foolishness of his sin, also feels that there is no hope of his being rescued from its consequences, and that he has lost the power to overcome it. At this point he is in great need of help. He must be made to see that there is hope for every sinner who is prepared to throw himself upon the omnipotent love of God; a love which not only receives back, but which gives power to renew life.

The pastor will sometimes have to deal with the case of a penitent who has, for example, irreparably damaged his career or his health by his sin. It is true in such a case that there is no escape from the temporal consequences of sin. This fact may well lead him to despair if he is unable to see beyond these consequences. It is not always easy to help him to realise that separation from God is of greater import than the wrecking of his own career, and that the vital consideration is that he should be forgiven, *i.e.* reconciled to God. Once he is able to grasp this he will cease to rebel against the temporal consequences of his sin, and be prepared to bear them gladly and with courage.

The pastor will, however, have to deal with cases in which there is no such deep remorse, but a more vague sense of failure. It may be simply the recognition by the

penitent of the fact that he is not all that he should be: a vague dissatisfaction with himself as he is because he has missed the attainment of some ideal which he could not perhaps express clearly in words. This is best described as a sense of incompleteness: it is very common, and can lead either to penitence or to pessimism. In this type of contrition a strong motive to deeper penitence is provided by the thought of what others would think of us if they knew us as we are. The sinner is often able to realise the fact of his sinfulness by seeing himself through the eyes of another. In certain circumstances this realisation may be rooted in a fear of discovery, which may therefore be an actual step towards repentance. In other cases there may be no fear of being found out, but rather a deep sorrow for failing to be what one ought to be.

A higher type of contrition is that which is based on a realisation of the fact that sin has hurt others. It will be especially strong if those persons continue to love the sinner in spite of the injury which he has done them. A child was once consistently disobedient throughout an afternoon, his disobedience ultimately resulting in his scarring his mother's face with a stick which he threw, in spite of her asking him not to do so. It was the sight of that scar, and the fact of the mother's continued and utterly patient love, which brought home to the child something of the meaning of disobedience and led him to a change of mind, *i.e.* repentence. It is clear that a penitent who has got so far as this is close to a true contrition, based on a realisation that sin has grieved the infinitely patient love of God. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The highest form of contrition is that which arises not only from a realisation of the love of God, but also of the

love of a perfectly holy God. This is probably rare in the earlier stages of the spiritual life, except for certain types of mind which are specially open to the impression of God made upon them through beauty of form, of colour, or of sound, or through love as seen in a much loved friend. "Woe is me, for I am undone . . . mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."

These forms of attrition and contrition are normal and healthy. The pastor, however, will have also to deal with states of mind in which there is a deep consciousness of guilt which is morbid. Two instances of such pathological guilt may be given.

In the first place there are those cases "of repentance when there is an intense consciousness of guilt, but a total absence of anything more than venial sin." In the second place there are cases of scrupulosity in which "the morbid insistence upon moral rectitude . . . is nothing but an 'over-compensation' for a sense of guilt which, however, never seems to be derived from anything more serious than mere peccadilloes."[1]

Such morbid states will not react to the normal treatment of the confessional. The appropriate methods of dealing with these cases will be discussed later in this book.

(*b*) Secondly, attrition and contrition involve an ever-deepening hatred of sin. This hatred of sin will vary in content from a self-centred recognition that sin has hurt the sinner, to the vision of the fully contrite penitent who sees sin as the rejection of the infinite love of God. In many cases this hatred of sin involves in practice no deep feeling, but rather an intellectual apprehension of the fact of the sinfulness of sin.

(*c*) Thirdly, attrition and contrition involve a deter-

[1]L. Dewar: *Man and God*, p. 54.

mination to do all that lies in the penitent's power to amend and to make restitution. It is this state of mind which leads to confession, and to a readiness to do penance, and indeed everything which lies in the sinner's power to undo the harm which he has brought about by his sin.

Two things, however, must be made clear to the penitent. The first of these is that nothing which he can do can be an equivalent for the guilt of his sin. The penitent often desires, as he puts it, to make atonement for his sin. Nothing can atone for sin but the infinite merits of Christ the representative man, whose merits we may, however, share if we will accept the cross in order to be brought to His resurrection. Secondly, the penitent must be made to realise that great care should be taken in the choice of the methods which he employs in making whatever restitution is possible. To give counsel on this matter may require considerable skill on the part of the pastor. Frequently it is better to abstain from making restitution, if there is any danger that it may cause further harm to the person or persons who have been injured by the sin, or indeed in some cases to the sinner himself. Frequently the realisation that no restitution is possible is part of the suffering which sin involves for the repentant sinner.

Once the sinner has come to that state of mind which we call attrition or contrition, and has accepted the fact that God has through Christ given to the Church the Holy Spirit, by Whose power he receives absolution, the immediate preparation for confession must begin.

3. *Self-Examination.*

Before the penitent begins to make an examination of his conscience, there are two matters about which he must be clear.

He must first be able to distinguish between sins and sinfulness. It is a fairly simple matter to remember actual sins of thought, word and deed, and it is these which must be confessed; but the penitent should also be learning something of his mental disposition, sentiments and habits which are the root causes of his sins.[1] This cannot be done by means of a single self-examination. The priest must gradually help the penitent to see beyond his sins to their causes; this is, as we shall see, one of the purposes of questioning and of counsel; but the point to be made here is that in addition to a knowledge of individual sins, it is necessary for him to have some understanding of himself, and of the sinfulness from which sinful acts arise.

Secondly, it is necessary to distinguish as carefully as possible between sin and temptation. Especially does this apply to sins of thought, and in particular to sins against chastity and charity. It is very common to find penitents confessing sins of thought in regard to chastity when there has been no real acceptance of the thought; and it is moreover necessary to show that the guilt of a sin is proportional to the degree in which acquiescence has taken place. It is impossible to prevent thoughts entering the mind, and their coming does not of course necessarily involve sin. This point is clear from the account of our Lord's temptations. Temptation indeed is not in itself evil, but is a means of spiritual development. It is true, of course, that the character of temptation, and its power in its grosser forms, depends upon the past history of the individual. Since our Lord was truly man He must have experienced the normal human temptations occasioned by the possession of human instincts, but it is also obvious that the grosser thoughts which may come into the mind

[1]Dewar and Hudson: *A Manual of Pastoral Psychology*, Chapter II.

of one who has constantly committed sins of the flesh would not assail Him, or if they did, could not in any sense have really tempted Him. It is part of the punishment for sin which we have brought upon ourselves, and which we must accept, that we should have to struggle against temptations resulting therefrom. Penitents, for example, are frequently troubled because they feel out of charity with someone whom they dislike, when they neither desire to harm him and are even ready to serve him. They must be taught the true nature of Christian love and how to be freed from a sense of sin in this regard.

Another common delusion of penitents, especially of adolescent girls, is to feel that they have sinned when they have experienced sex dreams, and they need to be helped to see that no sin is involved.

The most difficult self-examination is before a first confession, unless this is made in childhood or early adolescence. It is usual to advise the penitent to divide his past life into periods, and to examine these separately. Every life can be thus divided, and such division greatly assists the carrying out of the self-examination. The penitent should also be taught to trust to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in making his self-examination. He should not strain to remember the past, but be encouraged to believe that, if he is seriously honest, he will be shown that which it is needful for him to remember.

The provision of a system of self-examination presents the pastor with a real difficulty. He must be prepared to take real trouble in helping the penitent to discover that system which is most suitable to him. Something will be said later of the questions commonly found in devotional books; frequently they are unreal and inadequate, and suggest an altogether imperfect type of virtue. Certain

general considerations are of importance in deciding upon a scheme of self-examination.

1. The scheme must be positive and not negative, directing the penitent to the ideal and not dwelling upon the sin. Moreover this will help him to realise the all-important fact that the most serious sins may be sins of omission rather than sins of commission. The person who constantly holds before himself the Person of our Lord will find self-examination easiest and of the greatest spiritual value. Sin is seen most clearly in the contemplation of perfection. To sin is to fall short of the standard set by Christ, and it is more valuable to examine oneself by a list of virtues based upon our knowledge of His character than to test oneself by a list of vices.

Many systems suggested in devotional books are based upon the Ten Commandments, and much misplaced ingenuity has been displayed in an effort to expand this primitive code to cover Christian standards. Far too little reference has been made to our Lord's fulfilment of them in the Sermon on the Mount, or to His summary of them in the Law of Love. This leads to a feeling of unreality which is absent if the New Testament, rather than the Old, is taken as a guide. As examples of New Testament passages which may be used for the purposes of self-examination we may cite the following: The Beatitudes, our Lord's Parable of the Last Judgment, the fruits of the Spirit in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the account of the Heavenly Wisdom in the third chapter of the Epistle of St. James. Whatever system of self-examination is employed, some emphasis should be laid upon the important truth that the Holy Spirit is traditionally the Spirit of Wisdom and of Knowledge, and

that a fully-developed Christian character must needs display a Christian thoughtfulness and fairness of mind.

2. Most books which provide suggestions for self-examination give lists of questions. The objection to these is that they do too much, and leave too little for the penitent to do. They may, indeed, be ways of escape from real self-examination and from real self-knowledge. Especially is this the case with children, who are often given a sheet of questions and told to place a cross against those sins they have committed. The confession consists of reading aloud the printed questions, and the result is sometimes hardly edifying. We have known a Children's Mission in an East End parish where, after little preparation, a large number of boys and girls were given papers and pencils and told to make a cross against their sins, and there and then to come to the priest and make their confessions. It would be difficult to exaggerate the harm done by the use of such a mechanical method. A system of self-examination designed to escape this danger for children is described later on in this chapter. The danger of a mechanical and unreal use of questions is not confined to children, however, and every priest can remember cases in which confessions have consisted of the repeating of the words of a devotional book. Such a use of set questions may, indeed, represent true penitence. On the other hand it may be only an easy way of escape from a real knowledge of self and genuine penitence.

However, there are many who are incapable of examining themselves without questions, and it is important in such cases to provide a good system. Many of the lists in existence suggest an inadequate conception of the good life at which the penitent should aim, and in the light of which he should examine himself. Too frequently they

deal with small matters of ecclesiastical behaviour rather than with the root of sin, which is self-love: the weightier matters involved in the relationship of the sinner with God and with his fellow men are hidden in a maze of minor offences. Moreover there is frequently little suggestion that sins of omission may be more serious than those actually committed. The best set of questions for self-examination known to us is contained in a leaflet published by the Catholic Crusade entitled, *Sins and their Cure.* This scheme is positive, setting before the sinner a virtue in each section; the questions themselves might well indeed have been framed also in positive language. For example, the first question under the heading of Humility is: "Have I failed to recognise God as the Source of the justice, order and beauty in the Universe and in Mankind, and so been unthankful?" The same question would be of more value if it had been phrased: "Have I recognised God as the Source of the justice, order and beauty in the Universe and in Mankind, and so been thankful?" The main value of the scheme, however, is in the ideal of virtue which it sets before the penitent. Sin is not chiefly failure to obey rules, but is neglect to live in a right relationship with our fellow men and with God. Moreover, the idiom used is modern, and the questions consequently are more real and useful than those found in most devotional books.

The following is a description of a scheme of self-examination planned by the Reverend J. R. H. Moorman:

> "Each candidate came to me separately, and I talked to him about the necessity of trustworthiness in those who desired to be admitted to full membership of the 'Body of Christ.' But how are we to know what Our Lord

expects of us? So we took a Bible and I directed him to the 'fruits of the Spirit' in Gal. V. We then took a sheet of quarto paper and ruled it into three vertical columns and nine horizontal sections. In each section of the left-hand column I wrote one of the nine 'fruits of the Spirit'—*Love, Joy, Peace,* etc. I then asked the candidate to tell me what these words meant to him, and I wrote his answers in the second column, adding a few suggestions of my own. Thus opposite *Love* we might get 'Trying to be friends with people; forgiving others; not bearing grudges against people; helping father and mother.'' So we worked slowly through the list. I then pointed out that we had written a catalogue of the sort of things that a Christian ought to be. Then in the third column we wrote the opposites of all that we had written in column 2. Thus against the examples just mentioned we might have got: 'Refusing to make friends; not forgiving, but bearing grudges; quarrelling; not helping at home,' and so on down the list.

"I then told the candidate to take the paper home and meditate carefully upon the details of the Christian character in column 2, and try to get the ideal into his head. Then, in applying this to his own life and character, he would find that in certain places he had been straying over the line into the wrong column. Where this had happened his friendship with God was weakened, and the 'way back' was through Confession. I then instructed him to mark with a pencil the places where that had happened. The next week each brought his paper to me in church and (only with his willing permission) we went through it together and discussed certain details. The list having been shewn to me, I told him that he must now shew it to God, and gave him the perfectly free choice between private and Sacramental Confession, both having been carefully explained in the first interview. All but one chose the latter.

"Such is the plan which I have tried, and it has certainly been far more satisfactory than anything I have tried before. The weakness of the scheme is that you are inclined to miss certain real sins if you cling too closely to the mere opposites of the virtues which you have already noted. This can be avoided if the priest knows in his own mind what he wants the list to contain over and above what the candidate suggests. The obvious advantages are: (1) It is based on the Bible, which is treated as the normal text book of the Christian disciple. (2) It lays the emphasis on the positive virtue rather than on the sin, which is looked upon as an aberration from the ideal, and therefore something unworthy, something to be ashamed of. This is a real help towards Penitence, especially among the young. (3) The plan is of the candidate's own making, and therefore is likely to be more real and personal to him than any printed form drawn up by someone else. (4) Each paper has a certain individuality, and can be treated as strictly confidential. This the boy or girl will probably be proud to do, and it will thus avoid those sniggering conferences under lamp-posts or in the light of shop-fronts to decide which of the sins ought to be marked! (5) The scheme can be worked in subsequent years on the basis of the Beatitudes, or 1 Cor. XIII, or the Ten Commandments."[1]

It is to be noted that Mr. Moorman points out a weakness in his scheme: "The weakness of the scheme is that you are inclined to miss certain real sins if you cling too closely to the mere opposites of the virtues which you have already noted," and he suggests how the priest can avoid this danger in the case of children whom he is helping to prepare. The adult would be helped if, in addition to the use of some such method as this, he used a set

[1] *Theology*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 165, p. 165.

of questions such as that published by the Catholic Crusade.

It is clear that Mr. Moorman's method differs radically from that of the East End Missioner of whom we wrote earlier in the chapter. Mass production is not a method to be used in the pastor's work among his flock. It may be replied that the Missioner had to deal with numbers, and an individual method could not be used. This is no answer, because the pastor must be ready to give time to the individual, and he will be doing harm by using any other method. In most parishes there are adults who could be used to help children to prepare for their confessions, even if there be no trained worker available for this purpose. In the case of the Mission to Children there was a woman worker especially trained for, and experienced in, children's work, but she was not used, apparently because she was not a priest.

Mention must be made here of the common practice of daily or weekly self-examination, which may be a help in the more immediate preparation for confession. The pastor must realise that there is here, as always, no hard and fast rule applicable to every person. Like a good physician, he must prescribe only after a careful diagnosis of each case. For example, ther are introspective and scrupulous persons for whom a daily, and in some cases even a weekly self-examination would be a spiritual poison. Daily self-examination can degenerate into the worse form of day-dreaming, or into an orgy of introspection. On the other hand there are those for whom it is a valuable practice, and one which helps them to keep a check upon themselves, and to prepare for a full confession at regular intervals. It is often good to keep a written record of such daily or weekly examinations.

The daily examination should be short, and obviously no long set of questions should be used; the simpler the method adopted the better. Generally it is enough to pray to the Holy Spirit to reveal how one has fallen short of the Christian standard of love to God and neighbour, to make a rapid review of the day, and to trust that one will be shown what is necessary that one should see. There may be periods when one is striving to achieve some special virtue involving the conquest of some specific sin or fault, and then of course special attention should be given to this in our review of the day. Even to those not given to introspection there is, however, the temptation to allow one's thoughts to wander round the happenings of the day in a manner which is unhealthy, or at any rate a waste of time. Consequently we have emphasised the need for brevity. A weekly self-examination is, however, a different matter. It may well be more detailed, and some definite system may be used. Nevertheless, such a system should be changed frequently lest it become unreal.

We return to the penitent's self-examination before his use of sacramental confession. He should be taught that it is desirable to write down the result of his self-examination, and thus to prepare a written confession. Most priests have had experience of the penitent who does not write his confession, and know that the strain is far greater for him in such a case. Moreover there is always the danger that something will be forgotten.

So far we have considered the self-examination of normal persons, whether before a first confession or otherwise. Other cases, however, are important. In the first place there is the penitent with a morbid sense of guilt, who is often a scrupulous penitent. He must be taught that it is his duty in the confessional to confess actual sins; he

should not be allowed to confess sinfulness. He must strive to be objective and detailed, because the priest will thus be enabled to determine whether or not he is confessing actual sins. In the case of some scrupulous penitents, however, self-examination must be strictly curtailed. This will not be satisfactory for the penitent, unless he feels he can trust the confessor when he assures him that he is not being lax or careless. Once more, there must be an implicit trust in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, there is the very difficult case of the penitent more advanced in the spiritual life, who after long self-examination can find no sins to confess, although he is convinced that he must have sinned. In such cases it is common for a penitent, after perhaps a period of three months, to have only one or two venial sins to confess. These are rarely cases of gross spiritual blindness, although such do occur at a much lower stage of development. If the penitent is worried he must once more be taught to rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit: meanwhile the confessor can strive to show him the highest standard, the very likeness of Christ. It is not easy to decide the cause of this difficulty. It is sometimes due to the fact that owing to real discipline the grosser sins have been conquered and venial sins are not recognised as such. This is a point at which real self-knowledge, of which we have spoken, is of great importance. We may fail to recognise our sins because we are unaware of our weakness, and cannot easily accept ourselves as we are. Again, this difficulty may be due to a too negative conception of sin, and an inability to recognise sins of omission. It is sometimes forgotten that sin is always failure to love.

This type of penitent raises a question of some importance. It is usually suggested in books on moral theology

that if a penitent can discover no sins to confess, he should be taught to confess some past sin for which he has already received absolution. It is urged that in this way the penitent will grow in humility and in the horror of sin. It is perhaps not wise to contradict too hastily teaching which rests upon much experience, but it cannot be denied that there is an atmosphere of unreality about this practice which seems to be contrary to Christianity. In one sense it is pretending to the priest that one has committed a sin of which one is innocent, although obviously no one could confess an absolved sin of the past after beginning with the usual formula, "since my last confession." The practice is, however, not only unreal, but worse: it seems to be contrary to the truth of God's forgiving love. Once we are reconciled to God and to the Church we should not look back upon the past, but forward to the future.

CHAPTER IV

THE HEARING OF CONFESSIONS

BISHOP WEBB reminds us[1] that the confessor should display the love of a father, the skill of a physician, the wisdom of a theologian or spiritual doctor, and the acuteness of a judge. This four-fold definition of the priest's function provides a convenient classification.

1. (*a*) *The Priest as Father.* In this capacity he will cultivate, for the individuals of his flock, a love akin to that of our Lord Himself: a love which has, for its reverse side, a growing hatred of the sins which injure those whom he loves.

This means, in the first place, that he will take a personal interest in each individual: his penitents will be to him real persons and not mere cases. When hearing a confession, or listening to the story of some difficulty or failure, he will strive to enter into the life and mind of the person to whom he is listening, and in some sense to identify himself with him. This will help to generate true "fellow-feeling" between himself and the penitent, which will be of the greatest assistance to the latter in the unburdening of his grief. There are few things of more value to the priest than this ability to enter into the lives of those to whom he ministers. The priest who has learnt to give himself in this way to the individual who needs him will have no desire to fit each person into the same mould

[1]William Walter Webb: *The Cure of Souls*, p. 1.

of sanctity. It is true that experience will teach him to classify cases, and unconsciously to relate one case to another according to their common symptoms; but he will never forget the uniqueness of each personality, or that it is this uniqueness which makes each soul precious to God. There is no standardised treatment of persons: each must be given the encouragement or remedy proper to his condition. This is especially true of those who are beginning the practice of mental prayer: such souls are hindered and discouraged by a priest's efforts to confine them to one or other of the traditional methods of meditation.

This emphasis on the pastor's care for the individual must be balanced by the reminder that one who is trying to love as God loves will learn at the same time to give the fullest freedom of action to him who is loved. The priest's apron-strings are hardly less dangerous than those of the most possessive parent, and, though there are penitents who delight to have it so, clergy who use their own personality to attract and hold people are likely to be doing serious harm. The priest should rarely, if ever, relieve a troubled conscience with specific advice; the penitent should be helped, rather, to see the situation clearly and to take all its factors into account, and allowed to make the ultimate decision for himself. The temptation to the priest to take another line is often great; at such times he will bear in mind the method which God Himself uses in dealing with His children. A severe test of the pastor's concern for his flock may come when a penitent leaves him for another confessor; or when he knows that it is his duty to urge a particular penitent, whom he sees to be relying too much upon him, to confess to another priest.

It is clear that the priest who is too busy to listen is

failing in his duty. He will, moreover, try to remember that in the confessional he is administering a sacrament, and that his obligation is fourfold: to hear a confession of sins; to give what counsel he considers necessary; to administer penance; and to give or to withhold absolution. The penitent, for his part, must recognise that the confessional is not the place for long conversations, and the priest will be wise to give abundant opportunities for consultations at other times. Outside the confessional, at any rate, the priest must never be too busy for such individual work.

Any suggestion of hurry must be avoided. The confessional is sometimes a priest's only opportunity of dealing with a particular individual, and penitents are not infrequently repelled and discouraged by feeling that confessors have not given them the help and understanding which they needed. It is particularly difficult to give adequate time and attention to each penitent in large parishes before the great festivals, when there may be large numbers; yet among them, from time to time, is to be found a case which demands much more help than can be given to it in the time at the priest's disposal: in such cases, a consultation outside the confessional should be suggested and, if needs be, pressed, although the penitent must be left free to accept or to refuse the suggestion.

Finally, the pastor will always expect the best of his penitents. This is especially true of the negative-minded type of penitent, who finds it difficult to believe in or to recognise the grace of God at work within him. Encouragement is especially needed by a penitent who, having overcome the grosser sins, is becoming conscious of the strength of his self-will, and is tempted to suspect that it can never be overcome. He begins to examine his

motives, only to find that imperfect and sinful motives are mixed with the good in everything that he does: he becomes more and more aware, moreover, of sins of omission, the multitude of which seems to outweigh the fruits of his spiritual victories. Some words of St. Teresa are relevant in this connexion:

> "Some think it humility not to believe that God is bestowing His gifts upon them. Let us clearly understand this, and that it is perfectly clear God bestows His gifts without any merit whatever on our part; and let us be grateful to His Majesty for them; for if we do not recognise the gifts received at His hands, we shall never be moved to love Him. It is a most certain truth, that the richer we see ourselves to be, confessing at the same time our poverty, the greater will be our progress, and the more real our humility. An opposite course tends to take away all courage; for we shall think ourselves incapable of great blessings, if we begin to frighten ourselves with the dread of vainglory, when our Lord begins to show His mercy upon us. Let us believe that He Who gives these gifts will also, when the devil begins to tempt us herein, give us the grace to detect him, and the strength to resist him—that is, He will do so if we walk in simplicity before God, aiming at pleasing Him only, and not men. It is a most evident truth, that our love for a person is greater, the more distinctly we remember the good he has done us."[1]

(*b*) *The Priest as Spiritual Physician.* The duties of the priest as a physician of souls within the confessional may be summarised as follows:

i. He must be able to diagnose each case. To this end, he

[1] *The Life of St. Teresa of Jesus of the Order of Our Lady of Carmel*, written by herself. Ed. Zimmerman. Ch. X, 4, 5, p. 73.

must cultivate the capacity to see beyond the symptoms to the disease; beyond the sins to the sinfulness. It is useless, for example, to treat a penitent confessing auto-erotic practices as if they were the disease itself: they are symptoms of something much more deeply rooted; and a symptom, only too often, becomes more aggravated if it is treated without due regard to its cause.

ii. It follows that the spiritual physician needs skill in selecting and applying remedies. These cannot be standardised, but a priest who hears many confessions often finds it difficult to remember this. It is our own experience that, after hearing several confessions in succession, one is tempted to discover the same cause for all the various troubles described, and to apply the same remedy in every case; this probably means that one is projecting one's own thoughts on to the penitent instead of treating each case objectively.

Great care is needed in the suggestion of remedies. It is sometimes unwise for the priest to reveal at once what he suspects, or even knows, to be the real cause of the trouble: when this is the case, the application of the full remedy must be delayed. Unless the penitent is in the right spiritual and psychological condition to face the whole truth, he will be unable to recognise or to accept the priest's diagnosis, and the latter may have destroyed any hope of helping him in the future. Temporary treatment in such a case should be designed to lead the penitent to discover the real cause of the trouble for himself, and this may take a long time. Two problems of special importance in this connexion are discussed below.[1]

[1]See pp. 238 and 240.

(*c*) *The Priest as Counsellor.* The more "remote" preparation of the priest for this aspect of his work has been described in Chapter I. But, apart from such training, he needs to widen his experience of human nature by contacts of all kinds. Unlike the medical student, who has had some years of clinical preparation under experienced practitioners, the young priest comes to his work without any practical training; he cannot afford, therefore, to neglect any opportunities of learning to understand human nature. The difficult question of the relation between authority and freedom arises here. The priest is not acting upon his own authority as an individual, but as a representative and accredited minister of the Catholic Church. In many moral questions there is little doubt as to what the teaching of the Church is: no priest would be justified, for example, in giving counsel at variance with the view that suicide is in all cases sinful. But the Anglican priest may sometimes be uncertain as to his ultimate authority. What, for example, is the Anglican attitude towards war and pacifism? Again, faced with the problem raised by the use of contraceptives, is he to look to Rome, to the Lambeth Conference of 1930, or to his own judgment? It would seem that he must endeavour to find a mean between rigid authority and individual freedom. He will certainly find it necessary, on occasion, to make decisions without the backing of an authority which cannot be questioned. In doing so, he will remember that his aim is to interpret the mind of Christ.

(*d*) *The Priest as Judge.* The quality which Bishop Webb associates with the judge is that of acuteness. Roman Catholic moral theology, based as it is, for the most part, on a forensic view of sin, tends to exalt this function above the rest. In the present volume, we are anxious to give at

least as much importance to the priest's task as physician of the soul. Nevertheless, the character of the Sacrament of Penance is a tribunal, and the priest's judicial functions must not be made light of; and from this point of view it is his duty to estimate the sinner's penitence and to pronounce or withhold absolution.

Schieler-Heuser[1] sums up this side of the priest's work as follows:

i. He must rightly understand the matter of the confession. This may sound obvious, but cases occur in which the sin being confessed is not fully understood by the priest because he does not understand the vocabulary used by the penitent. It is a safe rule to let nothing pass which is not perfectly clear, though any questions that are necessary should follow rather than interrupt the confession. It is hardly necessary to emphasise the spiritual danger to the penitent involved in allowing him to cloak sin in ambiguous phrases.

ii. He must investigate the dispositions of the penitent: in other words, he must decide whether the sinner is penitent or not. In the Church of England, where the individual enjoys complete freedom in regard to the use of the Sacrament of Penance, it may generally be assumed that there is some measure of penitence, though there are of course cases in which individuals come to confession as a means of attracting attention, and though children and young people sometimes make their confessions because they are virtually compelled to do so at school or before Confirmation. A clear purpose to amend, and a readiness and desire to make

[1] *The Theory and Practice of the Confessional.*

restitution where possible, are clear signs of some measure of penitence. Further reference to this matter will be found in a later section.

iii. He must pronounce judgment; that is to say, he must set a penance and either give, refuse or defer absolution.

We may now consider certain matters relating to the administration of the Sacrament of Penance.

It goes without saying that the external environment should be such that there is no possibility of what the penitent says being heard outside the confessional. The priest will seek to remain recollected throughout. He will not look at the penitent as he approaches, will give no greeting, and will speak only of matters concerned with the administration of the sacrament. He will not in any way obtrude his own personality: every penitent should be able to assume that a certain formality of procedure will be observed.

2. *Questioning.* There are few cases in which the priest should interrupt the actual confession, and any questioning that may be necessary should come when the penitent has finished. The priest should only interrupt if he has to ask the penitent to speak more loudly or more quietly; if he neglects to say when he made his last confession, or whether he then received absolution; or if the names of other people are being introduced: even if the language of the confession is obscure, or if some of the matter is not clear to the priest, he should not interrupt at this moment. The various purposes for which questions may be asked are as follows.

(*a*) For the sake of clarity. Ambiguity may be due, as we have already suggested, to the use of local idioms which cloak quite obvious sins, or to a desire to slur over

certain sins; in the latter case, it is a sign of defective penitence. The use of phrases capable of more than one interpretation may also be due to the difficulty which a penitent finds in expressing what he wishes to confess. He should be helped to find words, if this is necessary, and above all he should be taught to make his confession in simple, straightforward terms. Occasionally, especially among adolescents, the penitent will use exaggerated language, suggesting far graver sins—especially sins of the the flesh—than those of which he is guilty. The intention here is to shock the priest, and it is very important, of course, that the penitent should be disappointed; it is to be observed that such a penitent rarely expects the priest to be shocked by sins of lovelessness and pride. Exaggerated language may also be the result of scrupulosity, or of the use of a set of self-examination questions from a devotional book.

Questioning should be discreet. The priest should be careful not to suggest sins to the penitent, and he must be on his guard against mere curiosity. In regard to sexual sins, he will be on the watch against two dangers: if he does not question at all, it is possible that sins will be withheld or disguised; on the other hand, he must avoid giving the penitent any excuse or opportunity for the display of an unhealthy exhibitionism. There are people who enjoy talking about their sexual difficulties, and great care must be taken with them, if questioning is necessary at all. It is commonly and wisely laid down that all questioning should be from the greater to the lesser except in matters about sex, when it should be from the lesser to the greater.

(*b*) Questions may be asked to discover something of the circumstances of the sin, and the number of occasions on

which it has been committed. On the one hand, the danger of a sort of spiritual book-keeping must be borne in mind; on the other, the impossibility of giving right counsel concerning a sin unless one knows the proportionate part which particular sins play in the penitent's life.

A penitent is, as a general rule, to be believed. We deal later with the difficult case in which the priest is positively aware that the penitent is keeping back a sin. The priest must judge for himself whether or not it is wise to enlighten a particular penitent who is simply blind to the truth about himself.

3. *Occasions of sin.* An occasion of sin is the external circumstance which leads to the committing of the sin:

> "in the language of psychology, an occasion of sin is a stimulus to an evil sentiment, or to an evil habit."[1]

An occasion of sin may be either *proximate* or *remote.* A proximate occasion is one which is very likely to result in sin; a remote occasion is one in which the danger of sinning is small.

> "It is because no two individuals have exactly the same evil sentiments, or the same evil habits, that the same objective set of circumstances may be a proximate occasion, or stimulus, to one person, and remote to another. For example, in the case of a person who has a gambling sentiment, a race-course is a proximate stimulus. But if a person has no such sentiment, it is a remote stimulus; if he has a hate-sentiment for gambling, it is a still more remote stimulus. A knowledge of a person's sentiments, therefore, is indispensable for obtaining a right estimate of what are for him occasions of sin."[2]

[1]Dewar and Hudson: *A Manual of Pastoral Psychology*, p. 165.
[2]*Ibid.* p. 165.

Furthermore, an occasion of sin may be either *necessary* or *free.* A necessary occasion is one which for some reason is inevitable, as, for instance, the necessary circumstances involved in the performance of a person's daily work. A free occasion is one which it is within the power of the individual easily to avoid, such as a friendship, which can be broken. We must now consider the priest's treatment of the penitent in regard to occasions of sin revealed by the confession and, it may be, made clearer by questioning.

First, it is clear that the penitent must be counselled to avoid a free, proximate occasion of sinning. Absolution should not be given until the penitent promises to follow this counsel: for, otherwise, it is clear that there is no full purpose of amendment. It is idle to pray: Lead us not into temptation, if we deliberately place ourselves in situations which we know from experience always cause us to fall into sin.

The most difficult case that arises here is that of the penitent whose occasions of sin are proximate and necessary.

> "For instance, such would be the case of a married man, with a family, who had a powerful sentiment for strong drink, and who earned his living by working as a barman. To give up his job might mean starvation for his wife and family; to remain, would be to run the appalling risk of becoming a hopeless drunkard. Can psychology give any assistance in advising such a person how to act, if it is inevitable that he should remain in his job? The answer dictated by psychology would be something like this. Although the sin in this case is based on an evil sentiment, and is not merely a habit, the man should be urged to make a complete and sudden break. 'Tapering off' is impossible in the case of sins arising from occasions which

are both proximate and necessary. This is an exception to the general rule of dealing with sentiments as contrasted with habits. It should be pointed out to the man that his sentiment will gradually weaken if it is not stimulated by drink, and it will greatly assist him if he makes the resolution to abstain in the first instance for a limited period, and then renews it. Further, the man should be shown the value of faith, and should be taught how to make acts of faith in God, to the effect that He will surely give him the victory. But, above all, he must be shown the great importance of stimulating his good sentiments, which in the case before us, are especially those of love for his wife and children."[1]

The penitent cannot of course promise to avoid all remote occasions of sin, since they occur to everybody; and we must remember that growth comes through temptation. The chief danger to be avoided here is lest the remote occasion should become proximate.

4. *Ghostly Counsel and Advice.* The English Prayer Book assumes that the priest will give counsel and advice to those who seek the "benefit of absolution."

i. Counsel should be definitely related to the confession; in other words, particular and not general. It would seem hardly necessary to say this, were it not that many have had experience of the little sermons preached in the confessional, perhaps on the collect for the coming Sunday; sermons which have no immediate bearing on the particular confession. The penitent is tempted to assume, probably with reason, that all the priest's other penitents are getting the same counsel; consequently, it will tend to be of little value to him.

[1]Dewar and Hudson: *A Manual of Pastoral Psychology*, p. 165.

ii. The counsel given should be direct, terse, and as brief as possible. A single question, probing to the roots of the sin, and revealing its character, is more valuable than a long homily.

There are various ways in which counsel may be valuable. In the first place, it may help the penitent to realise the seriousness of his sin, and to see how far his purpose of amendment is real. Those clergy who are outside parish life and who hear confessions from many parishes are familiar with the case of the person who has confessed for years without receiving counsel and who has in consequence made little progress. In such circumstances confession may become almost mechanical, the sense of sin may be deadened and real penitence destroyed. The danger is often even greater in the case of those who wander from confessor to confessor, confessing the same sins over and over again, and receiving absolution at required intervals with no purpose of amendment. A priest was once hearing confessions, by appointment, in a church near a railway station. A man whom he did not know and who had made no appointment came to his confessional and make a confession which contained very grave matter. Questioning immediately showed that the trouble was of long standing and deeply rooted. The priest realised that in the time available he could do little to help; what the penitent needed was regular and skilled treatment. It appeared that the man was in the habit of going from confessor to confessor, all over England, as he travelled in connexion with his work. Consequently, the priest advised him to seek a regular director, and suggested that the promise to place himself under such direction must be a condition of absolution. The penitent's only comment was "Oh, do

please be quick and give me absolution, I have a train to catch." Evidently he had found priests prepared to give him absolution under such conditions in the past.

Secondly, counsel will be concerned with occasions of sin, and will include methods of dealing with those which are proximate and necessary. It will also, of course, insist upon the avoidance of occasions which are proximate and free.

Thirdly, the priest in giving counsel will seek to penetrate deeper than the actual sins confessed and help the sinner to discover the root causes of them. For example, such a sin as a tendency to be over-critical of others may be confessed. In such a case it may be possible to show the penitent that such hyper-criticism is the result of pride and self-love. It can be pointed out to him that by depreciating others he is indirectly exalting himself. Again the sin of intemperance in drink may be confessed. It may be possible in such a case to show that this intemperance is ultimately due to a desire to make a good impression in society, and to be hail-fellow-well-met. In very few cases is it impossible to throw some light upon sin by viewing it from a fresh angle. It is surprising how often we fail to see the obvious on such occasions. Here indeed is one of the great values of submitting one's sins and problems to another person, especially one who is experienced in dealing with personal problems.

It sometimes happens that advice is needed in connexion with the higher reaches of the spiritual life. In such circumstances the confessor will probably be taken out of his depth, in the sense that he will be concerned with experiences to which he himself has not attained. It is of great importance, however, that he should have enough theoretical knowledge of ascetical and mystical

theology to be aware of his limitations, and not give counsel if he is himself incompetent to do so. In such a case his duty is to recommend the penitent to the care of some other adviser. St. Teresa in her autobiography refers to the ignorance of some confessors in regard to the higher forms of prayer. She says: "It is piteous to see what those confessors who do not understand this make people suffer."[1]

We have thus far refrained from using the word "director" of the priest in the confessional, because he is not necessarily a director in the technical sense of that word, even though he will generally give some measure of direction. Some persons, however, would probably be helped if they did make some priest their director, in that they confess to him regularly and more or less exclusively. One who is to be a director must needs have a real grasp of the principles of ascetic theology and of the history of the development of the technique of the spiritual life. He must also have a thorough knowledge of human nature; for direction is sometimes a refuge of suggestible and negative personalities. Too great dependence upon a director will weaken rather than strengthen such characters, and the director must aim always at developing independence and self-reliance in the right sense of that term. He must also be on his guard against allowing his own personality to loom too large. He should practice a very real "reserve."

A director or confessor, once chosen, should not be changed without careful thought. On the other hand, no personal reason should influence a penitent in making such

[1] *The Life of St. Teresa*, Section 28, Ch. XX. Every priest is advised to read the works of St. Teresa as a warning and an encouragement. Passages are too numerous to quote, but *cf. The Life*, 5, VI-XX; 6, VI; 26, V; *The Way of Perfection*, 4, V; *The Interior Castle*, 6; 8, X-XI, etc.

a change. It sometimes happens that the penitent in leaving one director, or going to another, treats it as a personal matter. This is by all means to be avoided.

5. *Penance.* There is a certain air of unreality in the teaching of moral theology regarding "satisfaction," or the doing of penance after confession. The word "satisfaction" is indeed unfortunate, and may well be dropped in this connexion. The only satisfaction for sin is the sacrifice of the Cross, and penitents should often be reminded of this, and that nothing that they themselves can do is of any avail by itself. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the use of the word "penance" in the place of "satisfaction."

Some re-thinking of the traditional teaching about penance seems to be necessary. There are two possibilities. In the first place, we can go back to the earlier conception of the gravity of the penances set. The following is an extract from "a penitential ascribed to Egbert of York," quoted by Dr. Kirk in *The Vision of God*:

> "Tell me what you have done and thought. Have you sinned in thought, word or deed? have you sworn by the gospel on the altar?—ten years' penance . . . have you used idle words or entertained hatred?—fast on bread and water for as long a time as that during which the offence continued . . . spoken lustful words, committed sacrilege?—seven years' penance, three of them on bread and water."[1]

Here there is at least an attempt to equate the seriousness of the punishment with the gravity of the sin. We should remember, however, that in practice this system was not so exacting as it appears, since there were ways of evading

[1] K. E. Kirk: *The Vision of God*, p. 293.

it, in the performance of penances by proxy, or by commuting them with money payments, and so forth. Moreover, this system, and the idea of punishment underlying it, leads directly to the teaching and practice of indulgences. We contend that it is impossible to set a penance equivalent to the gravity of the sin, because this necessarily involves loss of fellowship with God. Moreover, even if it were possible, experience shows that grave penances tend to be evaded, and so cause the sinner to add sin to sin. Again, such a conception of the penance is based upon erroneous views of satisfaction, which are contrary to the fact that the sacrifice of the Cross is the only satisfaction.

The other way out of the difficulty is frankly to acknowledge that the penances set are in no sense to be regarded as punishments, equivalent to the gravity of the sins confessed, but are acts of a sacramental character which we perform as outward expressions of our penitence: in other words, they are token payments of the penalty. The penance thus becomes an acknowledgement that we have deserved punishment, and are willing not only to perform our penance but gladly to accept any temporal consequences which our sins may involve. Clearly the truly penitent sinner will regard the performance of the penance as an obligation. Wilfully to neglect it is a fairly clear indication of lack of penitence, and hence of forgiveness. It is a sin which must be confessed and absolved.

If this theory of the penance be accepted, we can continue to set the almost negligible penances which have now become customary. We must not, however, forget the second purpose of the penance, which is restoration. The penance should bear a definite relation to the circumstances of the penitent and the nature of the sins confessed.

The most usual penance to set is the reciting of some collect, office, psalm, or other form of devotion. Even this should have some relation to the person and the sin confessed. Examples which may be given are the using of the Veni Creator, or some other prayer to the Holy Spirit, when the confession has revealed spiritual blindness or the necessity for some definite act of amendment, requiring special strength: the using of the General Thanksgiving, with the special intention of gratitude to God for some definite blessings, when the confession has revealed some dissatisfaction with, or blindness to, God's gifts.

Penance, however, need not be confined to the use of such forms of devotion; the penitent may be asked to perform some act of restitution or of charity. Care must be exercised in setting such penances, to ensure that they are within the power of the penitent to perform within a short while after the confession. There must also be no danger of breaking the seal of the confessional by performing a penance. For those who have neglected public worship and prayer, penances may be set requiring attendance at a single Eucharist, or the keeping of a rule for one day, as a new beginning. Some simple act of fasting or of self-denial may be prescribed for those who have confessed lack of discipline of the body. Care, however, must be exercised here, especially upon those who enjoy inflicting pain upon themselves. The use of the "discipline" is sometimes set as a penance. Nobody who has read much of the abuse of flagellation, or knows anything of its psychology, could ever advise this as a penance; yet its use is not unknown, even as applied to women, in the English Church to-day.

In conclusion, care must be taken by the confessor to distinguish between the penance set and a "task" given

to the penitent. The penance is a symbolical act, willingly undertaken as a symbol of penitence; it is an act of sin not to perform it. A task is some act of discipline which the penitent is *advised* to practise as a means towards the reformation and development of character. For example, a penitent may be set as a task the keeping of a rule of prayer for a month, regular daily prayers for someone with whom he is out of charity, self-denial in some matter—regulation of food or luxuries for a definite time and so forth. The penitent will, if he is sincere, do his best, if he accepts the task, to perform it; but it is not in the same sense symbolical of his penitence, nor is it in the same sense sinful to neglect it.

6. *Absolution.* The priest must remember that the most important moment in the hearing of confessions is the actual giving of absolution. There is a danger that this may be forgotten, and that the words of absolution may be said hurriedly and even casually. In giving absolution, the priest is exercising, on behalf of our Lord, His reconciling ministry, and he is enabled to do so only by reason of His sacrifice, death and perpetual intercession. The form of absolution to be used in the English Church is provided in the office for the Visitation of the Sick in the Book of Common Prayer. The priest should be careful to make no outward sign as he speaks the words of absolution, if there is any chance that he may be seen, for by so doing he would run the risk of breaking the seal of the confessional. He should, for example, never stand to give absolution, and it is wise not to make the sign of the Cross in doing so, unless there is complete privacy.

7. *Deferred Absolution.* Every penitent is entitled to absolution who approaches the sacrament in the right

frame of mind: who, that is to say, is truly contrite and purposes to amend:

"It isn't any good to say: 'I'm sorry, and repent,'
And then to go on afterwards just as you always went."

There is in the tradition of the Church of England no ground for thinking that absolution should be withheld in the case of peculiarly atrocious or abominable sins. "Sins that cry to heaven for vengeance" are forgiven through this ministry, no less certainly than lesser offences.

As to the reality of the penitent's contrition and purpose of amendment, the priest is the judge; and it may sometimes happen that he will think it wise to *postpone* absolution pending evidence of this. He will, it need hardly be said, be very gentle and tolerant in the exercise of his discretion. He will not, for instance, demand a display of emotion; he will remember that repentance is an act of the will, a matter of disposition rather than of emotion. But the advisability of deferring absolution should be considered in certain cases.

i. It is sometimes evident that a penitent has simply copied out, from a form of self-examination, those parts which apply to himself. But a confession no more specific than "I have neglected my prayers: I have not put God first in my life: I have been disrespectful to those set over me in the Lord: I have quarrelled: I have been angry: I have been impure in thought and word and deed: I have led others into sin: I have put off doing my duty" cannot be regarded as adequate. In many cases of this kind, the penitent has never been properly instructed; his failure in particularity is due to the simple fact that he does not know how to make his confession, not to any deliberate

desire for concealment; he is doing what he believes to be enough. When the priest is convinced that this is the case, three courses are open to him. He may ask questions. Or he may, before pronouncing absolution, point out to the penitent the desirability of greater detail, and warn him —possibly laying it upon him as his penance—to make a special point of particularity at his next confession. Or, thirdly, after speaking of the need of detail—making clear to the penitent, by means of illustration, precisely what he means—he may suggest to him that he should go away, revise and improve his self-examination, and return later (perhaps the same day, in any case not later than the following day or the next) to make a fuller confession and to receive absolution. But, whichever of these courses he may follow, the confessor will emphasise the willingness to be specific and particular, not only as a sign of contrition, but also as a means of deepening it.

ii. It may be stated as a general principle that the confessor will give a penitent the benefit of any doubt he may entertain as to the genuineness of the latter's contrition.

> "The faintest glimmer of sorrow will suffice, and every confessor has the experience of the penitent whose initial sorrow appeared slight indeed, but who, on receiving the gentle admonition of a prudent confessor and absolution, goes away with a degree of sorrow that even a saint might envy."[1]

On the other hand, the priest is the guardian of the sacrament, and he must protect it from anything approaching to sacrilegious use. Real lack of contrition, when the confessor is convinced that he is face to face with it, *must* be regarded as a ground for deferring absolution; the penitent

[1]Davis, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 278.

must be sent away unabsolved. The reason for the withholding of absolution will be explained to him, and he will be told to return, with the least possible delay, bringing fruits—or the promise of fruits—worthy of repentance.

Defect of sorrow for sin shows itself in five principal ways. A confessor is right to suspect it if the penitent shows signs of having been content with a careless or perfunctory preparation for his confession: if he is argumentative about the confessor's diagnosis, or about the remedies prescribed—still more, if he refuses to adopt them: if it is clear that he is slurring over or concealing certain sins: or, finally, if he shows a marked tendency to excuse himself, or to blame others, or to plead extenuating circumstances, in the recital of his confession.

It is sometimes urged that "direction" is not an essential element in the sacrament of penance. We have been informed by some clergy of our acquaintance that, warned by past experiences of long and irrelevant homilies delivered to them at the conclusion of their confession—or of "next Sunday's Collect" as a penance—they are accustomed to omit the word "counsel" from the opening words of the usual form of confession ("and of you, my father, penance, counsel and absolution"). This might be taken to involve a more rigid distinction between the priestly offices of judge and spiritual physician than it is possible to maintain. It would be, indeed, preposterous to suggest that the priest's work in the confessional can be regarded as accomplished when once he has diagnosed the situation and pronounced sentence thereon: or that a penitent can have the dispositions necessary for forgiveness, and at the same time feel himself under no obligation whatever to give heed to the godly admonitions of the minister to whom he had unburdened his soul. We have,

indeed, in the course of this book, urged more than once that in certain cases it may be advisable to instruct and advise a penitent, *with his consent,* outside the confessional; but we take this opportunity of removing any possible misunderstandings, by saying that, in our judgment, there are very few cases in which no "ghostly counsel and advice" whatever, relevant to the penitent and his condition, should be given at the time when a confession is made.[1]

If this be admitted, then a penitent's refusal to heed advice may well be a sufficient ground for deferring absolution. In particular, absolution should be refused to a penitent who declines to avoid "proximate and free" (*i.e.* avoidable) occasions of sin. Thus, a man of sedentary occupation who found it impossible to keep awake and attend to his work if he sat in an armchair, might be told to avoid such chairs, as being obvious occasions, to him, of the sin of sloth; if he refused to accept this admonition, absolution would be deferred until he came to a better mind.

iii. It may occasionally happen that a penitent omits to mention a grave sin of which the priest knows him to have been guilty since his last confession. If his knowledge is positively certain—if, that is to say, he actually saw or

[1]A confessor would, of course, refrain from all but the minimum of "counsel" in the case of a penitent who, to his knowledge, was under the normal and continuous "direction" of another priest. A person making his confession during a holiday, for instance, might reasonably expect to be given the minimum of counsel if he informed the priest that he was in the habit of making his confessions regularly when at home, and that the priest who heard them was also giving him continuous help and advice in all matters pertaining to his moral and spiritual life. The analogy of medical practice is helpful here. A doctor called in to deal with a patient suffering from an attack of asthma when away from home would, while doing all he could to shorten the attack, be careful not to prescribe a general and continuous line of treatment, which might conflict with the measures recommended by the patient's own doctor on the basis of a more intimate knowledge of the facts.

heard the sin committed—and if discreet and judicious questioning fails to elicit it, and if he has no doubt whatever as to the date of the penitent's last confession, he should give him a chance of coming to a better mind by postponing absolution, giving, as his reason for doing so, his very strong suspicion that the penitent is wilfully concealing a serious sin. The penitent is unlikely to return if the concealment was wilful; if, on returning, he still does not mention the sin in question, he should be absolved, on the principle that a penitent is entitled to the benefit of the doubt; the priest should conclude that he has forgotten it, however difficult this may be to believe.[1]

iv. In the case of habit-recidivists absolution may be, on occasion, most profitably deferred: less on the ground of a defect of contrition, than as a practical remedial measure. If, for example, the penitent shows little or no evidence of having resisted temptation, avoided occasions of sin, or used the remedies prescribed at his last confession, it is sometimes worth while to send him away for two or three days[2] on probation, and not to absolve him until he shows that he is making some serious efforts to overcome his evil habit.

8. *The Seal of the Confessional.* We must now speak more fully of the seal of the confessional, and in particular of the ways in which it may be broken. The 113th Canon of 1603 lays upon the Priest the duty of secrecy "under pain of irregularity," which "meant deprivation, accompanied by

[1]It must in fairness be added that this course of action would not be approved by all moral theologians. Some hold that in a case when the confessor has actually seen the sin committed, absolution should never be given.

[2]Possibly longer, so long as he understands that he need not refrain from receiving Communion during the period, and the priest is sure that he will suffer no spiritual damage through not being absolved at once.

incapacity for taking any benefice whatever, while under its operation." The Canon runs:

> "Provided always, that if any man confess his secret and hidden sins to the minister, for the unburdening of his conscience, and to receive spiritual consolations and ease of mind from him, we do not in any way bind the said minister by this our Constitution, but do strictly charge and admonish him, that he do not at any time reveal and make known, to any person whatsoever, any crime or offence so committed to his trust and secrecy (except they be such crimes as, by the laws of this realm, his own life may be called into question for concealing the same), under pain of irregularity."

The exception, at first sight, seems to deny the absoluteness of the seal and this needs some consideration. It appears to mean

> "that the priest may, if he feels he must, reveal a crime confessed to him, the concealment of which would put him in danger of his life by the laws of the realm . . . there is no law in England which makes the mere concealment of a crime an offence punishable by forfeiture of life . . . it does not appear that any such crime has ever existed, even with regard to the crime of treason. . . . Nor, may we add, is there any known case where a cleric has claimed the alleged privilege."[1]

We may then take it that the exception is meaningless, and that the priest of the English Church is bound by the same absolute seal as the Roman Catholic priest—"The priest may not break the seal even to save his life."

There is a useful section in *The Moral Theology of*

[1] F. G. Belton: *A Manual for Confessors*, p. 91.

Penance, by W. W. Williams,[1] with regard to those who are under obligation by reason of the seal and to those ways in which the seal may be broken. We summarise his teaching.

In addition to the priest who hears the confession, the seal "binds any *superior* who, *with the permission of the penitent,* confers either with the priest or with the penitent concerning any matter submitted in confession;" it binds "any letter written by the priest to the penitent, *with the permission of the penitent,* concerning the matter of the confession;" it binds "*any person whatsoever,* whom, with the permission of the penitent, the confessor consults, either personally or by letter, concerning the sin or sins submitted in confession;" it binds "any person who either inadvertently or intentionally *hears* anything submitted in the tribunal of penance: the *mere hearing* of any such thing *intentionally* is itself a violation of the seal;" it binds any person to whom the *confessor,* either inadvertently or intentionally, has communicated anything submitted to him under the seal;" it binds "any person who reads any paper on which the penitent has written his confession . . . moreover the intentional reading of such a document would be *in itself* a violation of the seal."

The seal may be broken directly or indirectly. It is important to consider ways in which the seal may be broken indirectly. The book from which we are quoting gives no less than twelves instances of the indirect breaking of the seal, and they indicate the care which must be exercised by the priest apart from the almost inconceivable possibility of divulging the matter of a confession. The priest cannot be too careful to avoid any reference to his work in the confessional, to individuals who use his

[1]W. W. Williams: *The Moral Theology of Penance,* Chap. IV, pp. 112 ff.

ministry, or to knowledge which may come to him in the course of this part of his work. It is a safe rule never to discuss (except in cases of professional necessity with other priests) anything whatsoever to do with the hearing of confessions. Although it is technically not breaking the seal to say that a particular person has made his confession, the priest is wise if he does not even go so far as to make such a statement as that. The number of ways in which the seal may be broken indirectly is almost incredibly great.

9. *"Reserved Cases." Licensing of Confessors.* The Church of England makes no provision for the "reservation to higher superiors of certain more atrocious or pernicious crimes;"[1] though there would probably be general agreement among Anglicans who have given thought to the matter that no priest can absolve his own accomplice in a grave sin, and that the victim of *sollicitatio*[2] *in sacramento poenitentiae, seu confessorii seu poenitentis,* is under an obligation to denounce the offender to a higher spiritual authority with the least possible delay.

But there are undoubtedly occasions on which an Anglican confessor may find himself in serious doubt: either as to what counsel he should give, or as to whether the circumstances of the case demand that, before giving absolution, he should—with the consent of the penitent, and with an assurance that neither the latter's identity nor any clue to the precise circumstances shall be revealed —take further advice himself. The kind of problems here referred to will occur to the reader; we may mention, as

[1]A list of Reserved Cases is given in Appendix I of Volume III of *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, by Fr. H. Davis, S.J. The R. C. bishop in each diocese commonly reserves certain sins to himself or to confessors specially appointed by him.

[2]*sc. ad quodlibet peccatum contra castitatem.*

examples, that of a priest persisting in a course of conduct which, if known, would make it impossible for him to be allowed to continue in his office; or a churchwarden guilty of misappropriation of church funds; or a woman's confession which involves a charge of grievous and continued sin against a priest. The confessions of priests, in particular, may, on rare occasions, create very difficult problems. Is a clergyman guilty of grievous and persistent sin to escape discipline *in foro externo* even though he makes use of the sacrament of penance? Is he, on the other hand, to be penalised, when another priest, guilty of the same sins, escapes detection—and assistance and absolution—because he makes no use of this means of grace?

These are difficult problems: they and others like them are leading to an increased demand for some system of *licensed confessors*, *penitentiaries*, or *counsellors* in Anglican dioceses. It is generally known, we imagine, that this whole subject has been recently discussed by the English bishops, and that some of them have already issued regulations, in regard to the hearing of confessions, for the guidance of their clergy. These regulations commonly include the following:

1. that no young clergyman will be permitted by the Bishop to hear confessions as part of his normal ministry until (i) he has been in Priests' Orders for three (in some cases two) years; (ii) he has undergone some suitable training under competent supervision, read certain books, and been tested on his knowledge of the subject.

2. that no Priest should hear the confession of a brother-priest, except in an emergency (when the Bishop's dispensation will, if possible, be sought), until he has himself been five years in Priests' Orders.

3. the communication by the Bishop to his clergy of a

list of "counsellors" or "advisers" whom he has appointed for consultation when circumstances arise like those referred to above.

It is much to be desired that episcopal regulations along these lines may be developed. But it is no less desirable that "advisers" should be made use of *as rarely as possible*. If anything could hinder the increasing use of the Sacrament of Penance in the Church of England, it would be that penitents should come to suspect that, instead of being able to make their confession and be done with it until next time, they were as likely as not to be told that the priest would like to consult someone else, or that he would like them to consult someone else, before they could be absolved, or after they had been absolved. More than three hundred years ago Roman Catholic bishops were warned

> "against reserving without great circumspection sins of the flesh, lest scandal should arise, and the good name of those penitents who had recourse to extraordinary confessors should suffer."[1]

[1]Davis, Vol. III, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

CHAPTER V

MINISTRATION TO THE SICK

IT is generally recognised that sickness may provide the Pastor with a considerable spiritual opportunity. The sick person is perforce turned aside from the normal distractions of daily life, and, if his illness be not too acute, is afforded ample opportunity for reflexion, especially in the convalescent stages. At such times his thoughts may often (though, it must regretfully be added, not always) be turned towards religion more easily than is the case when he is immersed in the floodstream of daily life and business. Many a man or woman has been converted to God through the agency of an illness, although it is unfortunately also true that many appear to be entirely unbenefited thereby, and even to be driven further away from God. It is, therefore, imperative that the pastor should know how best to approach the sick so as to seize any spiritual opportunity which may be presented to him. This is a matter requiring real skill and knowledge. Sick visiting is very far from being an amiable and desultory "chat" with the patient in order to "cheer him up." It does not require the services of a priest to do this.

However, before the priest can rightly exercise his ministry in this regard he must make up his mind upon an important question. Is disease the will of God? The Book of Common Prayer says roundly that God sends sickness,

and backs up its opinion (it must be confessed) by a misapplied quotation from the Epistle to the Hebrews, the passage in question relating not to disease but to persecution. It may be safely said that the teaching of the unrevised office for the Visitation of the Sick is not in accordance with the teaching and practice of our Lord. So far as our records go, He never said anything even remotely resembling the language of the Visitation Office. On the contrary, the whole tenor of His ministry suggests that He regarded disease (though not suffering) as an enemy to be fought, and, on one occasion at least, He referred to a chronic case as being one whom "Satan hath bound."

It is important to mark the above-mentioned distinction between disease and suffering. It is obvious, on the face of it, that Christianity gives no countenance to the doctrine that suffering is necessarily bad; for the Cross stands at the centre of the Christian revelation and we are taught to believe that the Captain of our Salvation was "made perfect through suffering." It is, therefore, sometimes argued that disease, being a source of suffering, must be a good thing. This, however, does not follow in logic, and, in fact, the inference is never drawn in the New Testament. On the contrary, a distinction between sickness and other forms of suffering seems to be necessitated by the evidence which it affords. Our Lord continually fights disease, but suffering in the path of duty He deliberately embraces.

Is disease never God's will, then? We must reply quite definitely that it is not. We may say that God permits sickness but not that He wills it. Disease is disorder in the body even as sin is disorder in the soul. God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as St. Paul insists.

Whenever disease attacks the body, the forces of life, the so-called *vis medicatrix naturæ*, counter-attack with all their might in order to repel the invader.[1] If God were to send sickness, how could His kingdom stand, for it would be divided against itself? Unless we are to land ourselves in a contradiction, we are bound to assume that disease, like sin, is contrary to God's will, although we must perforce admit that it is (in a manner far above out of our sight) included in His providence. This is not to say, of course, that the illness of an individual is the direct result of his own sin, although sometimes this is plainly so, as, for instance, in the case of a drunkard afflicted with *delirium tremens*. What is affirmed is that sin in the human race has brought in its train the horrors of disease. The latter is, as our Lord implied, part of the work of the Devil. The fact that God can turn it to good account does not alter the matter. God can do this because of His supreme power as God and as Creator. Disease, however, like sin, remains in itself an evil.

In practice everybody assumes the truth of the foregoing position every time he sends for a doctor. Yet many sick persons illogically hesitate to pray for recovery, or else they cover up their hesitancy by adding to their prayer the words, "if it be Thy will." It must be emphatically stated that it is undesirable to use this formula in ministering to the sick because it is surrounded in the minds of many people (perhaps the majority) with the wrong associations. They think of God's will as something rather grim and unpleasant, instead of "good, perfect and acceptable." We read the words "Thy will be done" upon tombstones, but not upon wedding cards. Moreover, its use may easily conceal a real lack of faith by leaving a

[1]This, of course, is what leads to a rise in temperature.

loophole in case nothing should happen in answer to the prayer for recovery. It should, therefore, as a general rule be avoided in dealing with the sick, especially if they are not well instructed in the Christian faith. The Pastor should seek to evoke in the patient the attitude of faith, as our Lord did. The sick person should be led to trust "perfectly and without all doubt" in God's goodness and power to heal. Nor should he limit that power by the verdict of the physician. The latter is not infallible. The patient must be impressed with the fact that there are many persons walking about the streets to-day who have been given up by the doctor.

It is important to realise the necessity for a faith free from doubt. A simple illustration will make this clear. If a person is bidden to walk along a narrow plank, everything depends upon the absoluteness of his confidence for the success of the enterprise. If he has absolute confidence, he will succeed. If he doubts, he will probably fail. As the proverb says, he who hesitates is lost. Let us suppose that he is reposing his confidence in God to enable him to perform the task. It is clear that by adding the phrase, "if it be Thy will," he is completely undermining that confidence. In like manner, the same evil effects will be experienced if he is asking God to heal him of his sickness. He will, *ipso facto*, be depriving himself of that faith which, as the Gospels clearly show, our Lord requires as a prerequisite for the manifestion of His power.

If the question be asked, Can God heal any disease? it is enough to be able to reply that it is impossible for us to set the limits to His power. Science hesitates to give a clear answer to this question, and when miracles of healing occur, as they do, will say that the diagnosis was mistaken

or else that the cure is inexplicable. Naturally, it must be so for science. But scientific knowledge does not cover the whole of experience. It is limited by the present range of human knowledge. Things which science cannot understand happen every day. In the face of inexplicable or miraculous happenings, the scientist should beware of adopting a superior attitude, which may be nothing short of ridiculous. *Punch* recently illustrated this point. A specialist meets a former patient, whom he had some time before pronounced to be incurable, walking along the street, obviously in robust health. He greets him with the remark: "Ah, I see that some quack has been tinkering with you."

The pastor, then, will visit his sick folk, armed with two fundamental convictions: (*a*) Disease is an enemy to be fought; (*b*) We can set no limit to God's power of healing, except, of course, our inability to co-operate. Nevertheless, it may be that it is not God's will that A. or B. whom he is visiting should recover. What is he to do? He should seek to lead the sick man to an attitude of absolute faith in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and teach him to ask for healing, with absolute faith in God's power and goodness; assuring him that he will either recover his health (even despite the verdict of the doctor) or have something which *he himself* (not necessarily other people) will recognise to be better. In this way he will achieve that state of mind and heart in which the things that ought to happen can happen.

It will frequently be necessary to remove definite obstacles in the patient's mind and life before such an attitude can be reached. Broadly speaking, these fall into two classes, viz., unrepented sin and erroneous ideas of God. Obviously, it may take some time before these

hindrances can be fully disclosed. If the sickness is acute and time presses, the priest must do the best that he can. If it is chronic, he should set before himself as the main objective of his earlier visits the discovery and the removal of obstacles of this kind. If he allows the patient to do most of the talking at first, contenting himself with an occasional word here and there discreetly to guide the conversation along the right channels, he will probably be able before very long to diagnose the situation and to lead the patient to face it. In some cases, of course, the latter is frankly and persistently non-co-operative, but it is safe to say that these are in the minority. In these circumstances, the priest will continue to pray and to await his opportunity. Never will he allow himself to cease visiting a patient[1] simply because he appears to be unresponsive. If he perseveres, he will be richly rewarded. The mere fact of his regular and persevering visiting will be an object-lesson on the patient love of God, whose representative the priest is. To teach such a lesson no trouble or pains can be too great. Ultimately, it is the supreme task of the priest to give to his people, to the sick as to the whole, a right conception of God. Only thus can a right faith be evoked and the dangers of a self-centred credulity avoided.

In his ministrations to the sick, the parish priest is faced by two distinct classes of persons: (*a*) the uninstructed, who seldom or never go to church; (*b*) the faithful, who are in varying degrees enlightened. These two classes are further subdivided into acute and chronic cases. His method of approach will naturally vary greatly in these different circumstances, although in every instance

[1]Unless, of course, he definitely asks him not to come again. This rarely happens.

he will go in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver.

In dealing with (*a*), as soon as the priest enters the house he will take the opportunity of talking with the relatives downstairs before going up to see the sick person. In this way he will gather a great deal of valuable information about the patient. In particular he should make a point of discovering, in acute illness, how far the patient is fully conscious and whether there has been any wandering of mind. It is important to learn this in view of the possibility of any kind of confession being made. In such circumstances, this can hardly be other than quite general, although the priest should always give the patient a chance of mentioning particular sins. When there has been no delirium, confession (necessarily of a rudimentary kind) should, if possible, be obtained at once in case unconsciousness should supervene. This must be obtained by asking the patient a number of questions, such as the following: Has he neglected his prayers, the reading of the Bible, and going to Church? Has he been ill-tempered and quarrelsome—in particular is there any quarrel which he has not tried to make up? Has he given way to lying, dishonesty, and impure actions, alone or with others? Is there anything in his past life which is on his mind? He may then be shown a crucifix—or a picture of our Lord on the Cross—so that he may be brought to realise what our sin means to God, and, having repeated after the priest a simple form of confession, absolved. This need not take more than four or five minutes, nor should the visit last longer than this. It is very important that visits to serious cases should be brief, and frequent. The priest should go every day, and, if possible, in critical cases, twice a day. It is a very good plan to make one of these

visits late in the evening, when the priest may lay his hands upon the patient and pray that he may sleep peacefully during the night.

It sometimes happens that the patient is unconscious when the priest is called in. He should, however, never neglect to pray for the patient in such cases,[1] and he should lay his hands upon him. The relatives may be invited to join in the prayers at the bedside. When the patient is conscious, however, it is necessary that the priest should see the patient alone. This is sometimes difficult to do, as, in some parts of the country, the relatives come into the room as a matter of course. The priest should tactfully and in as kind a manner as possible say that he would like to see the patient alone for a few minutes, adding that he will ask the relatives to come in for a prayer together afterwards. He should gently but firmly insist on this, even though the relatives may not like it. In course of time it will be a generally recognised custom in the parish, and there will be no difficulty about it. Those well-intentioned priests who are content to treat a critical case in a room crowded with relatives and friends are failing to carry out both the letter and the spirit of the Visitation Office, and are making great difficulties for their successors in the parish. The people should be taught to regard the visit of the priest as a professional visit, as they regard that of the doctor, in fact, and the clergy have only themselves to blame, if they fail to do so.

If the case is chronic, the priest will, naturally, be able to adopt quite a different procedure. Time does not press, and there is usually little difficulty in seeing the patient alone. In any case, no harm is done if one or two relatives

[1] "Unconscious" patients sometimes hear a good deal more than their friends suppose. The priest will, therefore, choose his words as carefully as if the patient were obviously conscious.

are present at the first few interviews. It will then be easy, after a time, to tell them that he would like to be able to talk privately with the patient,[1] and that there is no need to trouble them to come up into the sick room. The priest's objective here is to give steady and connected instruction, designed to remove any of the already-mentioned obstacles which may exist in the mind of the patient. The Apostles' Creed forms an excellent basis for such instruction. The priest should be regular in his visits, if possible coming on the same day each week, whether the visits are weekly or less frequent. The clergy do not always realise how eagerly these visits are anticipated and welcomed. It is a great help to the patient, if he knows exactly when to expect the clergyman. Naturally, he will inquire which is the best day for him to call, and, if possible, act accordingly. He will note down all his visits carefully in a book, as does the doctor, for this is the only way of ensuring regularity. In the course of a prolonged series of visits, the priest should give the patient literature to read, appropriate to the subject of his talks. Thus, if he has been talking about God, he may lend the patient a pamphlet on "God." Fortunately, it is possible to obtain excellent tracts and pamphlets to suit all occasions. He may also make use of halfpenny copies of the Gospels[2] which he will leave with his patients, telling them to read and think about certain passages before his next visit. In many cases this is probably more profitable than reading a portion of the Bible to the sick person, although this may sometimes be done, especially in the case of the older generation who tend to expect it.

[1]It is not, as a rule, advisable for a young priest to visit a young woman or girl in this way.

[2]Published by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Whether the sick person is in bed or not, it is probably wise to make a rule always to suggest (although not to insist upon) a prayer before leaving. Here it is a valuable practice to aim at getting the patient to join in saying the prayers after the priest. It must be remembered that it is sometimes many years since the sick person's lips have been opened in prayer, and this may be for him a new beginning. With simple folk, it is a useful practice to leave a picture—*e.g.*, of the Good Shepherd or of Bethlehem—for them to look at. We do not always realise how great an influence such a picture can exert upon the sick. In these days the wireless morning service can also be usefully brought into play.

As the result of a period of regular visits along the lines suggested above, the patient may be gradually led up to a state of mind in which it is possible for him to stretch forth the hand of faith to God and thus be capable of taking part in a solemn service of healing. In other cases, the priest will be led to rely upon a frequent and less formal laying on of his hands, especially when the patient is in serious pain. It is impossible, however, to set down hard and fast rules in this matter. He must act as the Spirit guides him, his objective always being to "make a man every whit whole."

In dealing with the faithful, the procedure is much simpler, provided that they have been properly instructed in these matters. Unfortunately, this is by no means always the case. The parish priest should, therefore, take care to instruct his people in Church concerning the Christian attitude to disease. He should also make use of the parish magazine for this purpose, inserting from time to time articles, or series of articles, on the subject. This is a particularly valuable means of teaching, because it

touches so many of those nominal Christians (who rarely if ever come to Church) to whom the pastor may one day have to minister.

In the case of one of the faithful, suffering from an acute illness, either solemn laying on of hands or unction should be used at once. Which of these? Unction is to be preferred in the case of regular communicants who understand the sacramental life, and who are, therefore, in little danger of harbouring magical notions concerning it. Experience shows that, even those who are "evangelical" by tradition, feel no difficulty about it, as a rule, when the Biblical reference in St. James V is pointed out to them. In their case, however, the use of sacramental confession (which is much to be desired in this connexion) will probably not be possible. If, however, there is any hesitation on the part of either the patient or the Priest, laying on of hands should be used instead.

The service of Holy Unction is a simple one. The room is prepared as for a sick Communion, the priest bringing the oil (which need not necessarily be blessed by a bishop) with him. It is convenient to use a little pocket vessel for this purpose.[1] In view of St. James's words about "the elders of the Church," it is good, if possible, to have more than one priest present. The sick person is anointed with the thumb on the forehead with the sign of the Cross. The oil may afterwards be wiped off with a piece of cotton wool, which should be burned immediately after the service. The near relatives and friends should be encouraged to attend and the faithful in church should also be asked to join their prayers. If there is in the parish a prayer guild, or circle, for the sick—a most desirable institution—it will naturally be asked to link its prayers

[1]Obtainable, it is to be feared, only from Roman Catholic shops.

(if possible) at the time of the anointing, as well as both beforehand and afterwards. A suitable form of service for both laying on of hands and anointing is published by Mowbrays.

Before we turn to consider the treatment of a chronic case among the faithful, a word must be said about those cases in which the priest is called, or calls on his own initiative, to visit one of his regular communicants who is laid low by a temporary illness of a not very serious nature, such, for example, as that class of distempers which we lump together (not very scientifically) under the word "'flu." It may be added, in passing, that the use of this word is no small stimulus to the disease, whatever it may be. Doubtless, it is to the advantage of the vendors of patent medicines to placard the word, but the priest will do well to teach his people to avoid the use of it. It must be confessed that a visit of this kind is sometimes far from easy. The priest will, as a matter of course, pray with the sick person, but it often happens that, if he is visiting one of the regular members of the congregation with whom the priest has got "so far and no further," it is very difficult in a single visit to make such spiritual contact. Nevertheless, he should endeavour to make it, without, however, giving too obviously the impression of improving the occasion.

To return to the case of the faithful suffering from a chronic disease, the procedure to be adopted is, *mutatis mutandis*, similar to that appropriate to the uninstructed, saving that the priest will be able at regular intervals to bring the Blessed Sacrament. He will find here a golden opportunity for deepening the spiritual life of the patient, and, as time goes on, will also most likely be able to use him as an intercessor. The intercessions of the faithful, laid aside by sickness for long periods, are a very powerful

aid to the priest's work. Once more, the way may be prepared for a solemn laying on of hands, or Unction. In those parishes in which the faithful have been well instructed, however, this may well take place at the very beginning of the illness. There is some difference of opinion as to whether Unction can be repeated in the same illness. The Roman Church says not, but others are inclined to permit as many as three anointings, on the basis of St. Paul's threefold supplication against the thorn in the flesh.

A word of warning must be added in connexion with psychoneurotic cases. Neither laying on of hands nor Unction should be used here, at any rate until the patient has progressed far along the road of treatment. The use of such means merely tends to intensify the childish attitude of mind from which the sick person needs to be liberated. Hence are brought about failures, which do nothing but bring these means of healing into discredit.

In teaching about Holy Unction, it is important to remove the widely prevalent misconception that the Roman Catholic doctrine of Extreme Unction—*Extrema Unctio*, the last of the anointings—is anointing *in extremis*. In Roman practice it often amounts to this, but the best Roman moral theologians make it clear that this is an abuse. Thus Prümmer says: "*Consulitur ne extrema unctio differatur usque ad extremum finem vitae, quia effectus sanitatis recuperandae semper frustratur.*" (Theol. Mor. III. 580). This is in accordance with the Tridentine doctrine which lays it down that bodily health is to be expected *uti saluti animae expedierit.* (Session 14, c.2).

The ultimate aim of the parish priest in his dealing with the sick may be summed up in the phrase—to make

a man "every whit whole," it always being remembered that the health of the soul is of greater importance than the health of the body. Thus he will bring the living Christ to his sick folk. He will be a health-giving power, and he will, accordingly, be welcomed by the doctor as an ally. In this connexion two practical questions remain to be considered: (*a*) What is the priest to do if the doctor has ordered a patient complete quiet? The answer is: Go and see the doctor. Usually the result will be that the doctor will gladly give permission for the priest to see him, once he realises that he is a sensible person who knows his job. In those cases where the parish priest knows the doctors who most frequently visit in his parish, this kind of difficulty is not likely to arise.

(*b*) If the patient is in danger of death, ought he to be told, especially if the doctor is opposed? The answer is that in practice it is not necessary, for the purposes of the priest, to do more than say to a person: "You know that you are seriously ill," or something like that. There is no point in telling him that he is going to die, before he himself knows it, as he may, in fact, not be going to die at all, unless the priest kills him by telling him so! The priest's job is to save the patient from "sudden" death (in the Litany sense of the word); whether death comes to him *unexpectedly* or not is irrelevant, if he is in grace.

Even the brief account which has been given of the healing ministries of the priest will have made it very clear that they make great demands upon him. Here, above all, it is needful that he should be a man of God. When he enters the sick chamber, what he is will avail more than anything which he says, for the sick are, as a rule, far more suggestible than the whole. If he is the kind of person who lives in an atmosphere of prayer, his coming

will, *ipso facto*, bring peace and healing with it. His calm and confident bearing will comfort and strengthen the sick person, and bring fresh light and hope into his life. Who is sufficient for these things?

CHAPTER VI

THE PASTORAL CARE OF CHILDREN

THE pastor's chief function in regard to the younger children of his flock is that of adviser to the parents and teachers who have the immediate care of them. Once he has gained their confidence and has shown that he has some understanding of the problems which arise in connexion with the moral and religious development of little children, he will be consulted constantly, and few departments of his work are of more importance. With older children and young people he will have a more direct contact. The tendency is generally to treat these in groups, and rarely to realise that there is much scope for important individual work among these younger members of his congregation. This is, of course, particularly true in regard to young people in their teens. Individual work among adolescents is difficult, and demands much time, but it is well worth while.

1. The most important factor in the early moral and religious development of the little child is the unconscious influence of the parents. This would suggest that the pastor's first task is to do all in his power to prepare young people for marriage. They should have some knowledge of the mental and spiritual growth of the child and, at any rate, realise that their own attitudes towards God and man will have much to do with the initial direction which their children take. Parents sometimes claim that they have no intention of influencing their children

religiously but desire to leave them free to make their own decisions later. They forget that they cannot help influencing their children unconsciously. The child may later rebel against the conception of religion held by the parents, or he may slavishly adopt his parents' ideas so that in later life they appear as indelible prejudices, but influenced in some manner and degree he will be.

Other influences due to parents and the home generally are discussed in other chapters, and the pastor should be aware of them. For example, in other parts of this book it is made clear how great is the influence upon the child of his emotional reaction to his mother and father, how great is the importance of the emotional relationship between the father and mother, and how important is the influence of the order in which the individual child comes among his brothers and sisters in the family.

2. Earlier theories of character training inclined to over-emphasise the value of habit: too little place was given to the emotions. The parent should realise that the vital thing is that his children should little by little feel the attraction of the good and desire to follow it. It is of only negative value to force a child, for example, into social habits of conduct if his dislike of them is sowing seeds of rebellion and hatred of society. Our task is to help the child to develop right sentiments, and this will only be accomplished when parents are doing all in their power to make the child see the reason for right conduct and to appreciate its value.

The little child is, at first, entirely egocentric; his first attraction to others is due to their ability to satisfy his instinctive desires. The parents' main task is to develop healthy sentiments, first towards the members of his family, and later towards friends and so towards society in

general. It is clear that the "possessive" parent will fail in this respect, just as it is clear that the only child who has no society of his own age to which to adapt himself will find the development of right sentiments towards society difficult. The parents' task is to lead the child from a selfish concentration upon the satisfaction of his own desires to a healthy co-operation with others. This is no easy lesson to learn, and great patience will be required if the child is to learn to desire to co-operate and so to learn to live with others and take his full share in communal life.

Every priest who has much to do with individuals constantly meets adults who are living lives which are less effective than they might be because of a deep-rooted feeling of inferiority due to experiences in childhood. The child is naturally inferior physically, mentally and socially to his parents and elder brothers and sisters. It was once thought well that he should constantly be reminded of this fact. If he is to be taught to co-operate with others in social life he must gradually be given confidence, and so be taught to use his developing powers. This idea is at the base of all modern methods of education. The child is placed in an environment which is not too overpowering and impossibly difficult, and he is given scope to make his own experiments in life under conditions which give him confidence and develop his powers. To illustrate this by a concrete example, in a nursery school the little child is provided with a world in which he can learn to live a social life with materials which demand effort but which are not altogether beyond his range. He is taught to wash himself and care for his person generally by being provided with utensils which are of a size with which he can deal. He is given confidence and is taught to co-

operate by being asked to help children smaller than himself.

Special care must be given to children who are physically inferior to the normal child, or who have some defect of limb or function. A child can be very conscious of such inferiority and its effects are felt throughout life. He must be taught to use the powers he possesses, and in the family he must not be allowed to feel that he is peculiar or that he is unduly handicapped. It is especially necessary to prevent, so far as may be, such a feeling of inferiority being intensified by the conduct of other children.

Parents will soon discover that they have to concern themselves with the actual conduct of their children—the problem of sin will face them early in the child's life. Obviously the parents' task is not to talk to their young children about sin but to help them to see the reason for, and to desire to follow, the right way. They must be helped to see as soon as possible that selfish conduct hurts others, and this will require some years of learning. It is often said that a good parent will never say "No" to a child. It is those who are not parents who usually talk thus, but it is true that whenever "No" has to be said a reason should be given. It is impossible in life to leave a person to learn entirely from his own experience; there is not time enough, and it is a waste of the accumulated experience of society. The child however will more readily adopt social habits if he is helped to see something of the reason for what we have come to consider right ways of living in regard to God and man.

It is not wise always to allow the child to escape from the consequences of his conduct when he is capable of bearing those consequences. This is the truer conception of punishment in regard to children. On the other hand, the

parent should be very careful to examine his motives when he feels called upon to inflict punishment. Punishment should only be remedial: it is often dictated by much lower motives.

The pastor is often consulted by parents with regard to "difficult" children. In extreme cases these should be referred to a Child Guidance Clinic, if such is within reach. The pastor himself will often be able to give advice which may help the parents. The important thing is to realise that there is always a cause of misconduct, and that we can do but little to help the child till we have discovered this cause. Sometimes the cause is organic and recourse to a doctor is necessary; more often the cause is to be found in the emotional relationship between the different members of the family. The child may be reacting to the tension between father and mother, he may be jealous of a younger brother or sister, and so on. Often the trouble is due to a wrong system of discipline, which is developing rebel tendencies in the child. The same rigid discipline may in another child produce an entirely negative attitude towards life, which is even more serious but will not so easily show itself in misconduct in early childhood.

The pastor will often be called upon by parents to deal individually with such "difficult" children when they are older. He must always search for the cause of the difficulty. When children lie or steal, parents and teachers often strive to correct this with punishments, sometimes ingenious, sometimes crude. One pastor was recently consulted by the guardians of a boy who lied frequently; the treatment was to thrash the boy, who was sent to the vicarage for this purpose, each time it happened. There is always a cause for such lying and stealing: sometimes easily discovered, sometimes, in difficult cases, more hidden.

When the cause is deeply hidden the expert is needed, but generally the pastor with a little knowledge of such things will be able to discover the cause and so remedy the disease.

An important part of the pastor's work is to help parents with the sex education of their children. There is a tendency to-day among those who have interested themselves in the sex education of children, to lay too great emphasis upon the importance of supplying the children with facts. It is suggested that nothing is necessary but knowledge. This solution of the problem is too simple. Knowledge is necessary, but if the child is to develop a right sentiment towards sex his emotional attitude towards his body, and later towards the fact of sex, is of greater importance. The parents must be careful to do nothing which will in any way hasten the slow development of the child's mating instinct. It is difficult to persuade parents that their own conduct in the child's presence, or the mother's unwise petting of the boy, may be a cause of harm and later difficulty. Nevertheless, all those who have had to deal with children who have become "difficult" know that very often the difficulty can be traced back to such causes.

Sex is a normal and natural factor in life and should be treated as such, although it must always be remembered that the instinct is strong and capable of arousing more emotion than almost any other instinct. Care must be taken to divert the child from any unhealthy interest in his excretory functions and in his own body generally, and neither these functions nor the body should ever be a source of humour or teasing.

The crucial moment in the child's sex education is when the child asks his first questions with regard to birth.

These and all other such questions must be answered simply but quite truthfully, the amount of information given being enough to satisfy curiosity for the moment. Other questions will follow in due course, and these should be answered in the same manner. If there is confidence between the parent and the child, and no perverting influence comes from other children or adults, the acquiring of knowledge is gradual: there is no shock and, since curiosity is satisfied, there is no danger that the child will question other children or experiment in undesirable ways.

As the child grows older, biological teaching in school will fill in the gaps and relate the particulars given by his parents to the general facts of generation in plant and animal. The mother needs to be careful to give her daughter careful and gradual preparation for the phenomenon of menstruation, and much harm is sometimes done to the emotional life of the girl when no such preparation is given. The problems raised by the practice of masturbation are dealt with in another chapter of this book.

What has been written above about sex education assumes that the major part in this will be given by the parents. In practice it is found that there are many parents who are unwilling or unable to do anything in regard to it. This is probably still true of the majority of parents. The pastor is therefore faced with the problem of the boy or girl who has acquired, generally from other children, a perverted and false view of sex. He knows the facts, but they are all out of focus. It used to be assumed that the time to give sex instruction to such boys and girls was before Confirmation: often a doctor was called in or a woman asked to speak to the girls. It is now realised that this is a bad method. Confirmation should not be

especially associated with sex instruction, and it should never be isolated from the rest of life, as it is if a specialist is called in to deal with it. Sex will come naturally into any instruction in morals before Confirmation, but care must be taken neither to over-emphasise or to isolate it. The priest will often realise in private interviews that some of his candidates are in difficulties about sex. He will then either himself deal individually with the case or, if he thinks well, get someone else to help him or her.

Young people need ideals in regard to sex relationships as much as, if not more than, they need facts. The facts without the ideal may only be harmful. This does not mean that when one talks of sex one does so sentimentally. The exact opposite is the case: one needs to talk of sex naturally and as a matter of course. What is meant is that the youth must be helped to see sex as part of God's plan—to see its part in the whole of that plan—and to realise something of the beauty as well as of the difficulty of human relationships. He will be helped to do this if the older boys and girls are given opportunities for mixing naturally within the parish family.

The pastor will, to-day, find that he has to face problems which are in some respects new, with regard to the relationship of the sexes among young people. The custom of hiking holidays, the summer camp, and the much greater freedom of to-day will need careful thought. On the whole, this modern development is probably good. Young people to-day have a new conception of each other; they use a new idiom, expressed in clothes and in conduct, which is healthier than the outlook of a generation ago, although startling to the adult. The pastor will have much to do in setting before these young people ideals in regard to their

relationships in this new-found freedom, and in keeping in touch with Youth Hostels and summer camps when they are in his neighbourhood.

The child's use of the Sacrament of Penance should be determined by his realisation that he has hurt God by his sin—generally, when the child is young, thought of in terms of disobedience. He has grown accustomed to the idea that when he does wrong he hurts his parents and friends. If he has come to think of God as his Father and of God's Son, Jesus, as his Friend, it will not be difficult for him to realise that, as he tells his parents and friends that he is sorry and receives forgiveness from them, so he will go to God and, in the same way, confess his faults and receive forgiveness. It is of great importance that this simple confession of sin by the child should be entirely spontaneous, and that it should in no way be required of him daily at an early age as part of his night prayers. As we shall see later, spontaneity (and so reality) must be the keynote of children's prayers, and one can only make a confession with reality when one is conscious, in some degree, of having done wrong. A normal child is not constantly conscious that he is a sinner, and he should not be urged to use language in his prayers which suggests that he is.

The actual use of the Sacrament of Penance will clearly come much later. There are those who teach children to make their confessions before a priest when they are about seven years old as a matter of course, believing that a habit will be formed and the practice continued. This is probably not harmful when, as in the Roman Catholic Church, everybody uses the sacrament, but in the English Church it often means that, since early confessions have meant very little, the practice is dropped when children

realise that the majority of their relations and friends do not make their confessions. We are convinced that no child should be urged to use the Sacrament of Penance till, in the first place, he really desires forgiveness—children can be deeply penitent—and, in the second place, he has grasped something of the idea of the Church as the Family of God. The first confession of a child—as well as of an adult—is of great importance, and a first confession which is merely a routine, meaning nothing, will do great harm to the child's spiritual life. Once the child has grasped something of what confession should mean, there is no reason why he should not be urged to come periodically to own up to God and to God's Family and to be forgiven.

The priest who hears a child's confession needs to remember something of the child's limited conception of sin. As we have already said, sin is conceived of generally in terms of disobedience, and the confessor should do all that he can to develop in the child's mind the idea of the Fatherhood of God, and of sin as a hurt to the Father's love. The priest must remember also that although the child may have some idea of the Church as the Family of God he will be inclined to think of the Family very much in terms of his confessor. It frequently happens that the child does not get beyond the thought that his confession is to the priest. The confessor must then do two things. He must gradually give the child a wider view of the Family and of the need for confession to it, and also lead him gently away from the confessor to God. Above all, the priest must not make light of the sins which the child confesses. They may appear trifling matters to the confessor; they are very serious matters to the child. A child is capable of an agony of grief and of a very real repent-

ance, and the priest may do much harm if he makes little of this grief and repentance.

The time of preparation before Confirmation is a very usual time for a first confession in those cases in which the child has not been taught of the sacrament at an earlier age. What has been said of the necessity of reality and spontaneity in the case of the little child applies with equal force to the boy or girl preparing for Confirmation. We have known very real harm done to boys and girls who have been virtually forced to make their confessions before Confirmation. We remember, for example, confessions being invented in a school dormitory because the school Chaplain had to be satisfied. This may be an extreme case, but there is a large number of candidates who never make their confessions again because the first was not entirely voluntary, or because it meant nothing at all to them.

Problems will arise when children and young people, whose parents are either ignorant of, or opposed to, the teaching of the Church with regard to the Sacrament of Penance, wish to make their confessions. The priest must be careful to do nothing which will in any way lessen the authority of the parent. There will be cases in which the children come from homes in which they are neglected, and in which the parents have little interest in them. The confessions of such children can be heard without reference to the parents. But when there is, as there always should be, a real family life, then the parents should be consulted by the priest. If the parents persist in refusing permission, the child must be urged to talk over his difficulties and faults with the priest, and he must be shown how to make a thorough preparation of himself and to make a private confession of his sins to God. The problem is more difficult

in the case of the boy or girl in the late teens. Very often, of course, he or she will make his or her own decision, and unless the child is uneasy in conscience there is no reason why parents need to be told. If the boy or girl is uneasy in conscience, it is best that the parents should be consulted, and we have known nothing but good to come of delay in cases when the parents object. Of course, the time comes when the youth is independent and should be standing on his own feet. Parents then have no right to dictate, and if they are likely to be hurt if they know that their children are using the Sacrament, it is better that they should not be told.

The most important part of the parents' task in connexion with their children is the presentation to them of their first ideas of God and of their first conceptions of prayer.

Reference must again be made to the unconscious influence of the parents. If God is to be presented as "Our Father," if the Church is to be described as the Family of God, much will depend upon the child's experience of parents and of home.

The child's first conception of God as the Heavenly Father should come naturally through the child sharing the mother's experience of God in prayer. A child's prayer life begins when the mother prays, and often aloud, with the child in her arms, long before the child is conscious of what she is doing. Later the child will become aware that from time to time he is neglected while mother speaks to Someone who cannot be seen. He will realise that this Person is of great importance, because nothing is allowed to interrupt his mother's prayers. The time will inevitably come when the child asks questions about what

the mother is doing, and to whom she is speaking, and this is the moment for the first definite teaching about God. He will be presented as the loving, heavenly Father who gives to His children all that is good and beautiful. When the child has grasped something of this conception of the Fatherhood of God, the desire to say thank you to our Father will come naturally and spontaneously, and the child's prayers for some little time should consist mostly of such spontaneous "Thank Yous." Slowly the idea of talking to God can be developed, and the child can be taught to bring all his interests and difficulties to God. He should not be taught at this stage to make petitions, because these may give him a misconception of the true purpose of prayer. The next stage will be the telling of stories about Jesus, God's Son, who came to earth to reveal God's love. These stories can be used as the first steps in the practice of meditation: the child should be encouraged to talk to God about the stories, and to think over them by drawing them with crayons on coloured paper.

The parents will be helped in these early stages of the child's prayer life if some kind of prayer-corner is planned in the child's room, with pictures, flowers and lights—the writers have known such corners in the poorest homes. When it is possible, the child should be given pictures to illustrate the stories he is told, but care should be taken to choose worthy pictures.

Very early in the child's life the parent should begin to introduce him to the idea of the Family of God, the Church. This will best be done by taking him regularly, of course out of service time because he is too young for services, to the Church as the home of God's family. Much valuable teaching can be given in this way and the child's natural interest should be cultivated.

In these early stages it is doubtful if the Lord's Prayer should be used. It is better to leave it till some simple meaning can be given to each clause—a simple, mental picture—and till the need for more formal prayers arises. For the time will come when the child does need forms of prayer, and care should be taken to see that these are as good as may be, and that they do not become stereotyped. The best way to achieve this is to encourage the child to make his own book of prayers. He can be given prayers and later he will find others. He can illuminate them, and find much joy in adding to his book.

The child's growth in prayer will not be without its difficult times. Every child, like every adult, goes through periods when he does not want to pray. The little child, at such times, should not be forced "to say his prayers." It is to be hoped that the teaching which he has received about God will later on lead him to see that he goes on with his prayers whether he wants to or not—only harm will be done by compulsion in the early stages.

The pastor will constantly be brought into contact with children who have been taught only "to say their prayers", and for whom prayer is an irksome use of a magic which does not work. It is far more difficult to correct wrong impressions than it is to give right ones in the beginning. However, few tasks are more important than to give children a true conception of prayer as a means of developing one's fellowship with God. Care must be taken to develop all the aspects of prayer and not to concentrate only on petition. The form of the child's prayers should be changed as he grows, otherwise they will not be real but will appear to be divorced from daily life.

After the spontaneity of early prayers, the child goes through a long period when prayer is far more formal, and

when it is necessary that the will should play a larger part. In mid-adolescence prayer often again becomes spontaneous and easy. Young people at this time often have a real experience of mental prayer. Care has to be taken to show that prayer depends upon the will rather than upon the emotions, because in time the fervour of mid-adolescence will pass. Prayer then becomes difficult and must be governed by some simple rule, if it is to be maintained with regularity and to develop. Much harm is sometimes done to the adolescent when the affective aspect of prayer is over-emphasised.

PART III

THE TREATMENT OF SPECIAL CASES

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL DISEASE

ONE result of the past thirty or forty years of psychological investigation has been to bring to light the existence of states of mind which are partly morbid, and, granting the existence of freedom, partly sinful. Such, at any rate, is the language which the theist must use to describe harmful actions which result from the misuse of human responsibility. In this psychological investigation the most assured result—on which all schools of psychology are agreed—is that the root of the trouble is invariably to be found in the earliest years of a child's life. Freud has been much reviled for attacking the doctrine of the "innocence" of the small child. Yet certainly no Christian need quarrel with him on that score. We need go no further than St. Augustine's *Confessions* for full corroboration. "Who can tell the sin of my infancy? . . . How then did I sin? Was it that I craved with tears for the breast? For if I were now to crave so greedily, not for the breasts but for dainties suited to my years, most justly should I be ridiculed and blamed. . . . Or may we say that for the time it was good to beg with tears what could only hurt if given, to fly into a passion because freemen, elders, parents would not humour a whim, because the wise would not run at our beck and call, to try to strike and hurt with all our might because our sovereign will was not obeyed. . . . I know,

because I have seen, jealousy in a babe. It could not speak, yet it eyed its twin brother with pale cheeks and looks of hate."[1]

Nevertheless the errings and strayings of the very young are not wholly blameworthy. They are largely due to unconscious forces, for, as Freud was the first fully to realize, consciousness is not a *sine qua non* of mental life. It is these unconscious, wayward tendencies which, we take it, are covered by the not very helpful expression, Original Sin.

We are not, however, immediately concerned with the theological problems of Original Sin. Our present concern is to estimate how it comes to pass that these mixed states of disease and sin are fostered and increased in the child's life. The simplest way to do this is to review briefly the mental development of the child and to observe the various danger points which it normally encounters.

Before the child is born, its existence in the intrauterine condition is one of evident satisfaction, all its wants being regularly and automatically supplied. At the moment of birth it finds itself suddenly plunged into a "big buzzing universe" and "with no language but a cry." It is absolutely helpless, and remains in a weak and hopelessly dependent condition for a period of years, in this respect being entirely different from any other animal. Like the rest of the animal world, it is possessed of powerful impulses, or instincts, which make it ever restless and unsatisfied. Unlike them, however, it does not know what it wants, and "will not be happy till it gets it." Moreover, its greater intellectual capacity and vastly increased imaginative powers cause it to look before and after as they cannot do.

[1] *Confessions*, I, 7.

Hence from a very early age the emotion of *fear* tends to predominate in the child, a fear which is compounded of its natural desires, enhanced by its powers of imagination, plus an inability to be certain of their realisation. Man's immensely great capacity for imagination here stands him in bad stead, making him a prey to imaginary fears, which are by no means unreal fears, as the ignorant suppose. Already in the first year of a child's life the stage is set for one of the two greatest practical problems of personal life, viz., the problem of the relation of the individual to society. The other problem is, of course, the relation of the individual to God, the Ultimate Reality.

And so we pass to consider in some detail the period of human life known as infancy, *i.e.*, the first five or six years. These are of decisive importance. All serious maladjustments of a morbid nature may be traced back to this time. This has been the outstanding discovery of modern psychopathology. In those early years is formed the child's disposition, which must be carefully distinguished from its temperament, which is innate. Its disposition, on the other hand, is acquired, being the result of the inter-play between the child and its environment. Thus the child in those early years acquires a self-assertive disposition, a timid disposition, a jealous disposition or a lazy disposition, to mention but a few examples. The number of possible dispositions, indeed, is beyond counting. Yet it is possible to classify them roughly and label them as is commonly done.

What, then, are the chief danger points in this period? They are to be found in the home life, and here it is important to remember that "a good home" in the accepted sense may be a very bad one psychologically. The most important figure here is the mother. The child's relation

to her is intimate. This relationship is hardly weakened if it is bottle fed. What is her psychological function? The answer is that she should be a bridge by means of which the child makes contact with society. The first other person with whom he should make contact is the father. He also plays a decisive part for good or ill. He will stand, according to his measure, for law and for authority.

The dangers of the situation are popularly known. We are all acquainted with the misfortune of being "mother's darling," and with the danger of an over-severe father, for example. And so we get the "spoiled," or the crushed, or the rebellious child. As priests, however, we need a far deeper insight into these dangers than this popular knowledge can give us. Let us examine them more closely.

We have said that the mother's task is one of supreme importance. It is also one of no small difficulty. A really good mother must be a self-effacing person. Her state of mind in relation to her beloved son must be: "He must increase but I must decrease." In other words, she must be prepared to act literally as a bridge by which her children learn to pass over into the world to live their own lives, leaving her behind them in a real sense.

Obviously it is no easy matter for a mother to be content to adopt such an attitude of mind. She has carried her children for months in her womb, and she has suffered to bring them into the world, perhaps a very great deal. It is not surprising that she should be tempted to try to get something in return by "tying them to her apron strings" and refusing to allow them to grow up and to let them live their own lives. Moreover, this temptation usually comes to her in a very subtle manner, so that she is frequently unaware of it. The technical way of expressing this difficulty

is to say that she is tempted to regard her child as part of her "undifferentiated ego." Since the child for nine months is physically part of her, it is easy to see that she may be tempted unconsciously to regard it as in a sense part of her even after it is born. Hence the tendency to tie it to her apron strings and to refuse to allow it sufficient independence. She thinks that by doing so she is showing love to the child. Actually she is showing a very subtle form of self-love. In some cases this comes out very clearly in the unpleasant habit, characteristic of some parents, of bragging about their children, or constantly talking about them. This is very thinly veiled egoism, and ought to be regarded as quite as objectionable as, and more harmful than, open boasting about themselves.

Unfortunately, the child is, on its side, only too ready to play the part which is thus expected of it. It returns the selfish "love" of its mother with an equally self-centred "love," and so we have the making of the spoiled child. The stage is already set for a "nervous breakdown" in later life. This condition of being a spoiled child is the commonest of all those mixed states, partly morbid and partly sinful, which lead to mental maladjustment.

We must here notice another point of the first importance in this connexion. If the child is a boy, the danger is peculiarly great, inasmuch as the relation between the child and its mother is heterosexual, and so there is likely to be formed what Freud has called the Œdipus Complex. In such a case, the little boy desires to possess its mother, being jealous of and hostile to its father. In other words, its attitude is incestuous. When he has been over-mothered, especially if he has been allowed to lie or sleep in the same bed as his mother, this tendency is almost certain to be aroused. The doctrine of the Œdipus Complex

is not popular, but nobody with any experience of psychotherapy can doubt the fact of its existence. Without making the Freudian mistake of declaring it to be universal in mankind, there can be no question that it is far from uncommon.

A not infrequent sign of its existence is the morbid sense of guilt sometimes associated with the practice of masturbation. In such cases it is found that the habit has its source in an incestuous desire for the mother,[1] a desire which, being a "complex," is, of course, unconscious. The sense of guilt which is associated in all communities with incest is then transferred to all forms of sexual behaviour, including masturbation. This takes place by the well-known psychological Law of the Transference of Affect —or, to speak popularly, but not quite accurately, emotion. This law states that emotion which is connected with some specific object or form of experience tends to be transferred automatically to any objects or forms of experience which are associated with them. Thus, for example, if we have learned to dislike a certain individual, the dislike will probably be transferred to the name which he bears. What are called "sentimental" associations provide another instance of the operation of this law. For example, a Bible bequeathed by a mother on her deathbed to her child will attract to itself much of the emotion surrounding the mother. Another example of the same kind of process is the devotion which a person may have to an old pipe or even an old coat. In like manner the sense of guilt which is associated with incest is often transferred to *all* sexual practices, including masturbation. That is why some persons regard the latter as such a terrible sin and are tortured by the thought of having committed it.

[1]Or, in the case of women, for the father.

The unconscious sense of guilt derived from the Œdipus Complex is also manifested in some forms of scrupulosity. It comes to pass in this wise. Obviously, a man who has this unconscious desire for his mother will repress it. But though he may repress completely the incestuous desire, he cannot so easily dispose of the sense of guilt attached thereto. This is apt to remain as a floating sense of guilt ready to fasten upon any passing trifle. Thus in this morbid state of mind mere peccadilloes become invested with a profound sense of guilt. Investigation into such cases reveals the fact that the thoughts or actions which are the alleged ground of scrupulosity are merely disguised substitutes for the real cause.

The average man is apt to be stubbornly incredulous concerning the reality of the Œdipus Complex. For example, a priest of long and wide experience in hearing confessions told us that he had never come across a single instance of it. The truth of the matter is that he had not been led to suspect its existence because he had never heard of it. In any case, penitents must not be expected to confess to it! We may illustrate this situation by taking a physical analogy. Old time medical practitioners used to say that they had never come across a case of appendicitis. The simple explanation of this is that, when they did, they called it "inflammation of the bowels," having insufficient knowledge to make a more accurate diagnosis.

We may now turn to consider the relation of the child to the father, and observe the dangers which arise in this connexion. There is here, also, the possibility of a perverted sexual relationship between the daughter and the father. It is known as the Electra Complex. Experience shows, however, that it is far less common than the Œdipus Complex. The reason for this is, in part, obvious, since

fathers are not wont to take their baby daughters into bed with them. Moreover, the mating instinct in a girl is as a rule not nearly so strong as it is in a man, being balanced in her case by the very powerful maternal instinct, which has no parallel in a man. Nevertheless, the Electra Complex does arise, and when it has come into being, everything conspires to fix the guilt of sex upon a woman. For men tend to "project" the guilt of their own sexual misdemeanours upon women, as witness the fact that sexual laxity in women is still frowned upon far more seriously than in the case of men, whose irregularities are condoned as "sowing wild oats."

The chief danger associated with the father, however, is not sexual but authoritarian. The father stands quite naturally for strength and authority. If he is a strict person, he may very easily unduly excite fear in his children. The result of this will be to produce either weak and submissive personalities, or else rebels who are always "agin the government." Herein is a possible unconscious root of aggressive atheism, where the individual gratifies his desire to "down" the earthly father, by denying the existence of the Heavenly Father.

In the case of girls, a dominating father is apt to produce undue submissiveness, resulting in the well-known, but much misunderstood, "inferiority complex." It must be emphasised that this is an *unconscious* sense of inferiority. It may easily, and frequently does, manifest itself consciously in a sense of superiority, which Adler has called the Masculine Protest. But whether manifested in this way or in some other, it is the commonest maladjustment in women, who, it must be remembered, have been downtrodden for many centuries in all civilised communities. Moreover, Christianity has been largely tainted by sub-

Christian modes of thought in this respect. Even St. Paul provides us with instances of this. It need hardly be said that the fact that women are wont indignantly to repudiate the suggestion that they suffer, as a sex, from this weakness, does not alter the situation. The very vehemence which sometimes marks their protest does but bear unconscious witness to the existence of that which they deny. "Methinks the lady doth protest too much."

We must here pause to consider a psychological mechanism which plays an important part in all morbid states of mind, and that is phantasy. This is an important manifestation of man's capacity for holding images in the mind. It comes into powerful operation very early in a child's life, being the sources of its delight in games of "make-believe." In itself it is, of course, not only harmless but also the source of many of man's creative powers. It only becomes dangerous when the phantasies indulged in are *egocentric.* Thus the snubbed or neglected child will often be dominated by phantasies of his own importance. The boy, who, owing to his laziness or his stupidity, is at the bottom of the class will indulge freely in phantasies in which he is carrying off all the prizes. The boy who is "spoiled" and "mother's darling" will have phantasies that he is even more wonderful than his mother thinks him to be. Thus by means of such daydreams as these the child increasingly loses touch with reality. His sense of self-importance steadily increases, in inverse proportion to the justification for it. Egocentric phantasy is always "compensatory" in character. The victim of it, being on the way to losing his life in the realms of reality, thinks to find it in his dreams.

It is impossible to exaggerate the part played by phantasy in producing mental and spiritual disease. It is the

maid-of-all-work of the maladjusted mind. It pulls down the blinds and thus prevents it from seeing what is happening in the outer world. It then proceeds to make the inside of the house as magnificent as a king's palace, persuading the master of the house that he is the king. Nor is anybody immune from the interference of phantasy. It is constantly painting false pictures in the minds of everybody, and few there be who are never deceived by them. These phantasies are phantasies of "perfection"; moral perfection it may be, or perfection in some accomplishment, or perhaps, perfection in our work. That is why there are so many "touchy" people in the world. Such persons more or less unconsciously harbour a phantasy of perfection. Hence they cannot tolerate criticism. Granting their unconscious premises, they are justified, for it is absurd to criticise perfection. Contrariwise, if a person is not perfect, there must always be room for criticism and for improvement. Sometimes we hear a person say: "Of course I am not perfect, but . . ." A remark like that should arouse strong suspicions that there *is* an unconscious phantasy of perfection lurking in the background; otherwise, why should the speaker mention the subject of perfection at all?

We must now examine some other causes, or, to speak more accurately, occasions of mental and spiritual disease in children. First we may mention what is known as "organ inferiority." This term was coined by Adler to denote those bodily defects which are apt to make a person feel inferior. Instances such as a hare lip, or a cloven palate, or a hunchback are obvious and will occur to anybody. Adler, however, extends the meaning of the term to cover *all* physical conditions which may engender a sense of inferiority, even though they are not, strictly

speaking, physical defects. As an example, red hair may be mentioned. Children who possess characteristics such as these obviously have a particularly difficult task before them in making a normal adjustment to life and society. They will evidently be peculiarly liable to develop a sense of inferiority, and, in consequence, will be specially sensitive to bullying or neglect, on the one hand, and "spoiling" on the other. They will be specially tempted to escape from the hard world of reality into the pleasant land of phantasy where all their dreams come true. Careful observation can leave us in no doubt that a very large proportion of such persons do, in fact, suffer from some form of mental and spiritual disease. On the other hand, they may rise above their limitations and find in their defects a spur to lead them on to greater achievements. Thus, Demosthenes, with an impediment in his speech, becomes afterwards the orator. Milton, the blind man, learns to create word pictures which have seldom been rivalled. Nevertheless, such instances as these are, unfortunately, exceptional, and in general he who has the cure of souls should in every case of difficulty which comes his way look at once to see if organ inferiority is a complicating factor in the case.

Another possible source of mental maladjustment to which Adler has also drawn attention is the child's position in the family. He has pointed out the usually forgotten fact that no two children in the same family experience the same conditions of life, even granting the most perfect fairness and wisdom on the part of the parents. To take instances: the eldest child occupies the stage alone, as it were, *for a limited time,* and he is the only member of the family who does this. When the second child is born he is, therefore, very liable to develop, un-

consciously at least, a grievance, and to regard himself as dispossessed. This is especially likely to happen if there is only a small space—eighteen months, a year, or even less—between the two children. In such cases the child is not old enough to be made to realise that his fears are groundless and to be taught to co-operate in looking after the new arrival. If may also happen when there is a long period of four or five years between the first two children, unless the parents have enough wisdom to guard against it. That this difficulty is not imaginary is conclusively shown by the fact—contrary to popular notions on the subject—that eldest children suffer from serious maladjustments in larger numbers than any others.

Again, consider a second child. He is never alone on the stage. He can never be first. As one such child put it, he can never be as old as his brother. But he may try to catch him up. This, in fact, is what he frequently does. The typical second child, according to Adler, behaves like one in a race. He tends to be over-ambitious. Jacob "the supplanter" is a characteristic second child, although he was only a few minutes younger than his brother. A miss is as good as a mile. There is a danger of emphasising this sense of inferiority in the second child by giving him his elder brother's clothes "cut down" for him to wear.

Yet again, the youngest child occupies a different position. He has no rivals to supplant him. He has no followers but many pace-makers. He, too, therefore is liable to be ambitious, and it is surprising how large a proportion of those who "do well" in life are youngest children. He is not, however, in the invidious position of being in a race with *one* other person. Consequently his position is, psychologically speaking, favourable, unless his parents are foolish enough to spoil him. Joseph, in

the Bible, is a typical youngest child. That he was "bumptious" in his youth cannot be denied: but he made good.

Once more, an only child is in a position which differs from all others. He has no brothers and sisters to rival him. His rival, if he has one, is his father. He is, therefore, particularly liable to develop an Œdipus Complex, especially as, being the only child, his mother is wont to lavish a too fond affection on him. He tends to be scared at the prospect of another brother or sister. One only child of five years old, a small boy, was asked by his mother if he had seen so and so's baby. He remarked with perhaps unusual frankness: "No, there are too many babies about."

It is evident from the foregoing examples that a child's place in the family will play an important part in the development of any mental and spiritual disease of which he may become the victim. The priest should always consider carefully this side of the evidence in dealing with those who manifest neurotic tendencies. It must be borne in mind that it is the *relative* rather than the *absolute* position in the family which is of importance. For example, if there are eight children in a family, and there is a gap of five or six years between the fourth and the fifth, number four may, from the psychological point of view, be regarded as a youngest child and number five as an eldest. For the sake of convenience we have thus far spoken of boys. However, in estimating the significance of a child's place in the family, due account must be taken of the respective sexes of the children. For instance, an only boy among six or seven girls, or an only girl among many boys, are plainly in a specially dangerous position. It must also be remembered that girls tend to develop more rapidly than boys, so that a girl who is only one or two years

younger than a boy may gradually catch him up. This may present a problem for the boy because, being older than the girl, he may suppose that he is expected to keep ahead of her. If he is unable to do so in the ordinary course of things, he may well turn to morbid and delinquent forms of behaviour in order to draw attention to himself. After all, in some ways it is more satisfying to be a villain than to play second fiddle to a model of virtue or of ability.

Enough has been said to indicate the nature of mental and moral disease, leaving out of account definite forms of insanity which involve obscure hereditary influences, and which lie outside the scope of this book. It will be clear that the root of all mental maladjustment is egoism or self-love. Whether it is the selfish desire to possess the mother (or the father); whether it is the egoism of phantasy which builds in the air castles where the self is king; whether it is selfish ambition to be first in the small field of the family or the wider field of the world; in each and every case self-love is the cause of the mischief. When the path of self-love is consciously chosen, we speak of sin. When it is unconsciously or half-consciously and half-unconsciously chosen—or, to speak more accurately, when there are both conscious and unconscious factors—we have those mixed states of which we spoke at the beginning of this chapter. It is these states which are the commonest, and which give rise to most perplexing problems for the pastor. To the question of their treatment we shall turn in a later chapter. Before we do so, however, something must be said about the normal course of mental development which must be taken if a child is to grow up to be a healthy-minded man or woman.

Since the root of all maladjustment is egocentricity, it follows that to preserve mental and spiritual health, a

person must—to use a phrase which has now become famous—be "disinfected from egoism." This cannot be done all at once, but, on the contrary, is a task involving a number of years, among which, however, as we have seen, the first five or six are of decisive importance. If during that period a child is fortunate enough to have parents, pastors and masters who are alive to the dangers and difficulties of the situation, and who, further (a most important consideration) are themselves well-adjusted individuals, it may be expected to grow up into a healthy and happy man or woman. There are some who think this can happen apart altogether from the influence of religion. They hold that it is sufficient for mental health that a child should learn to become unselfish by being adjusted to the claims of society, without any specifically religious adjustment. Possibly this is true. We shall have occasion to revert to the question later. One thing, however, is certain, and that is that for mental and *spiritual* adjustment man must come to terms with his Maker.

CHAPTER II

THE PRIEST AS SPIRITUAL PHYSICIAN

HAVING considered the nature of spiritual disease, we can now turn to the task of the priest as spiritual physician. As things are at present, the greater part of the psychotherapy which is undertaken is carried out not by the clergy but by medical men. The reason for this is obvious. The technique of modern psychotherapy was discovered by physicians. Their findings have naturally taken some time to win their way among the clergy as indeed has been the case among medical men themselves. Moreover, there has been a great unwillingness on the part of many medical psychotherapists to allow that the clergy have any business to interfere in such matters. In consequence, there are not very many clergy at present who are alive to the situation and to the great opportunities which are awaiting those of them who will take the trouble to make themselves competent in the art of psychotherapy with the aid of the best scientific knowknowledge.

It is probable, indeed, that the number of clergy who are capable of undertaking a full and deep analysis will never be large. Nor is there any necessity that it should be. Provided that in every diocese there are two or three such men trained for this purpose, this would perhaps suffice. In what should their training consist? That they study for some years all aspects of the psychoneuroses and

the psychoses[1] with the aid of the best books available goes without saying. But psychotherapy cannot be learned from books. It is an art which must be acquired by first-hand knowledge of the problems of the psychoneurotic. There are many who think that the indispensable prerequisite of this is that the therapist himself should have undergone an "instructional analysis." In this way he becomes intimately acquainted with the technique of analysis, and, moreover, gains a deeper self-knowledge, which will give him that mental self-balance so necessary for a good psychotherapist. Doubtless, there is much to be said for such a mode of training, when it can be had, but we do not share the view of those who would make it a *sine qua non*. What is essential is that the young psychotherapist should be able to consult with some experienced and skilful person in all his early efforts so that he may be saved from any serious blunders. In the end, the only way of acquiring the art (for psychotherapy is an art as much as a science) is by personal dealing with cases. If, moreover, the psychotherapist takes the view that the Holy Spirit is working in the unconscious minds of his patients, he will be saved from many of the errors to which other therapists may succumb. He who is analysed on orthodox Freudian lines, for example, is in great danger of being victimised by the prejudices of the analyst. As Dr. T. A. Ross has said: "Every orthodox Freudian has still a strong transference to Freud."[2] The best way in which to be liberated from prejudices, is, therefore, not *necessarily* to undergo analysis.

[1] *i.e.*, definite forms of insanity.

[2] T. A. Ross: *Analytical Psychotherapy*, Chapter X. The whole chapter, which deals with technique, is well worth reading. Dr. Ross, who was for some years Director of the most important resident psychotherapeutic institution in this country, takes a view similar to that advocated above with regard to the necessity of all analysts being analysed themselves.

We need, however, something more than a limited number of trained clerical psychotherapists. In addition to this, it is needful that the average parish priest should have sufficient knowledge to be able to use his influence to prevent psychical maladjustments from arising, and to be capable of dealing wisely with simple cases, putting them on the road to self-help and recovery. In the present chapter what we have to say will be directed towards the attainment of the latter objective. We hope to arouse sufficient interest in the subject to create in those clergy who read this book a desire to obtain the necessary knowledge; and, by the outline which is here put forward, we hope to give sufficient guidance to enable them to know how and where to look for it.

Thus far by way of introduction. We now turn to consider the task of the spiritual physician. We begin by reminding ourselves of the disease which he has to treat. The neurotic sinner is a patient as well as an agent. In the fullest sense of the words, he "has no power of himself to help himself." This is due to the fact that, as we have seen, he is under the influence of unconscious forces. It is the interplay of these forces with his environment which leads to these states which we rightly call morbid.

As it is vitally important to gain a true understanding of this point (experience shows that it is far from easy to grasp it), we may sum up what was said in the previous chapter by putting the matter in the following way. We may say that there are two causes of psychological disease: (*a*) internal, (*b*) external. The internal root of spiritual disease may be summed up in the word "pride" or self-love. The persistence of the egocentricity of the small child is the inner cause of all psychological disease whatsoever. This egocentricity leads to a morbid self-love

which in its turn easily engenders an unconscious sense of inferiority, commonly known as the inferiority complex. In the words of the ancient writer, S. John Climacus: "Fear is the sign of a haughty spirit," wise words which every priest should often ponder in his dealings with neurotics. Thus modern scientific knowledge confirms the ancient Christian tradition that pride is the root of all the capital sins: but when it is unconscious pride we should not speak of sin but of disease. For this unconscious pride engenders a condition of morbid fear which may have a devastating effect upon a person's life. Fear is a most damaging emotion because it is essentially self-centred. We are rightly taught that "perfect love casteth out fear." On the other hand, the more self-centred a person is the more will he be a prey to sundry fears. His egoism will naturally give rise to self-centred phantasies, and they, in their turn, will cause a host of imaginary (which are by no means unreal) fears. To these fears the neurotic becomes a prey in greater or in lesser degree.

Unconscious self-love which has never been outgrown is not of itself, however, sufficient to cause a breakdown. There are many persons full of unconscious pride who escape nervous breakdowns, and who are not, obviously at any rate, the victims of any form of psychological disease. Another factor comes into play, and that is the second cause of which we spoke, viz., unfavourable outward circumstances. Although he is not inwardly right, a person can avoid serious maladjustment for a long time and, perhaps, indefinitely if everything goes well, and pride has sufficient food to feed upon. That is why not every self-centred person is neurotic. He is, however, a potential neurotic. A neurotic is one whose pride, or self-love, has come into serious collision with the circumstances of life.

"Think ye that these . . . were sinners above all . . . because they have suffered these things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish!"

This all-important truth is illustrated by two well-known facts. The first of these is that a child who is "good" at home sometimes becomes very "naughty" at school. The parents profess to be greatly astonished. They cannot understand how little Willie who "was always such a good boy" can be ill-behaved. The explanation, however, is simple. At home little Willie's self-love was treated with respect, so why should he behave badly? But when he goes to school it is altogether different. Consequently he has got to make himself felt. Secondly, there is the familiar fact that "nervous breakdowns" very frequently occur in middle life, during the "dangerous forties" as they are called. In view of what has been said, there is nothing surprising in this. When a person is still young it is always possible for him to cherish the delusion that his self-centred ambitions will be realised later. But as the years increase upon him, it becomes more and more difficult to hold to this delusion. The consequence is a breakdown.

It is vitally important to bear in mind that *the unfavourableness of the outward circumstances is strictly correlative with the degree of inner self-love.* The higher the inward ambition, obviously the greater the likelihood of failure. For example, if a man has set his heart upon being a great high-jumper, able to clear six and a half feet, he will feel a complete "dud" if he is able to get over only five foot ten. On the other hand, a man who was aiming at five foot nine, say, would be very well satisfied with such a performance. Aristotle truly remarked that not to get what you have set your heart upon is as bad as getting

nothing. Many neurotics have unconsciously echoed the words of Haman, who refused to be comforted by the (considerable) degree of success he had attained. Like him they have exclaimed (inwardly): "Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." If Haman had not been hanged upon his own gallows, he would, probably, like Nebuchadnezzar, have developed a "nervous breakdown." The cause of a psychoneurosis lies, therefore, both in the present and in the past. In treatment both have to be taken into account, particularly when what Freud has called "the advantage through illness" comes into play. To this point we shall return.

Having now, it is hoped, explained clearly the nature of psychological disease, it is possible to gain an insight into its treatment. Here, again, there are two factors involved: (*a*) self-knowledge, or auto-gnosis; (*b*) the embracing of the ideal, or, as we may call it, self-oblation.

First there is need for self-knowledge. All schools of psychology are agreed upon this fundamental point. *Unconscious* forces are responsible for mental disease. By unconscious should be understood "unrecognised." Here is the essence of the morbid mechanism known as repression, which is an invariable factor in mental maladjustment. Repression is disguised, or unconscious restraint. It must by no means be confused with normal self-control, which is, of course, conscious. What, then, is the force which leads to unconscious repression?[1] It is sufficient for our purpose to say that it is self-love which leads to the repression of that which is painful to it. That is why repression is frequently associated with matters of con-

[1]The late Dr. Rivers explained what he took to be the historical, *i.e.* biological cause of this mechanism, in his book, *Instinct and the Unconscious*, which all students of this subject should master.

science, for it is painful to a person to recognise that he is not good according to his own lights.

It follows from this that the beginning of therapy is to bring to light such repressions. This is no easy task, for the patient is always in some sense *unwilling* to see the light. He loves darkness rather than light. Obviously this must be so, otherwise the repression would never have taken place and the maladjustment would not have arisen. Therefore, even if the physician can divine the cause of the maladjustment, it does not do any good, as a rule, for him to tell the patient in the first interview. Indeed, such a course may often be disastrous. The first task of the spiritual physician is to lead the patient to *want* to be enlightened, or, in other words, to inspire him with fresh confidence and hope to pursue the ideal and to face unpleasant facts in the process, if necessary. Here the character of the therapist, and particularly what he stands for, are factors of immense importance. It is at this point that a physician may feel acutely the lack of a spiritual ground and aim for his own life; and it is surely here that the priest can often supply what the secular psychotherapist cannot. There are, indeed, cases in which the egocentricity of the patient is bound up with his religion, and here the emotional attitude towards a therapist who is an official representative of religion is apt to create special difficulties. Apart from such cases, however, it would seem that at this point the pastor has a great advantage as a therapist.

This brings us to the second element in the cure; what we have called embracing the ideal. The patient has to be given a new outlook. It is not enough that he should know where he has gone wrong in the past; he must be given faith, hope and love for the future. As William

James said, many a rotter knows himself to be a rotter; that does not necessarily mend matters. He must have the desire to be different. Dr. Jung has said: "The patient is looking for something that will take possession of him and give meaning and form to the confusion of his neurotic mind." It is this combination of self-knowledge with a new orientation which leads to a cure. It cannot be made to order. It must just happen. Often enough neither patient nor physician can say exactly how it happened, although they cannot be doubtful of the fact.

This, then, is the task of the spiritual physician. It is easy to state shortly, but it may take many months of patient treatment to fulfil it. Obviously, it is a pastoral task. It would seem, on the face of it, to be one for which the priest is likely to be better equipped than the average medical man. He certainly has great advantage over the layman in many cases. Yet he also suffers from certain disadvantages, the chief of which (supposing him to be equipped with adequate knowledge) is the danger that he shall play the part of the moralist or the judge. It is, however, important to notice that, if he knows his job, he will not even wish to do that. He will realise that his true task is to assist the patient to yield to the direction of the Holy Spirit within him. In the words of Jung, he "must follow nature as a guide, and the course the physician then adopts is less a question of treatment than of developing the creative possibilities that lie in the patient himself."[1] Where Jung is content to speak of nature, we must needs speak of God. But the practical effect is the same, saving that if there be a God, it must plainly make a great difference if the physician recognises the fact. He will then regard himself as a fellow-worker with

[1] *Ibid*, p. 70.

Him instead of being a passive observer of blind forces, even if his form of co-operation be to "stand still and see the salvation of God." Milton's words: "They also serve who only stand and wait" receive here a new fulfilment. The fact that he prays for the patient (although he does not know this), and throughout treats the case in an attitude of reverence cannot be un-important.

In the foregoing account of the work of the spiritual physician we have been thinking of tasks which would usually lie beyond the scope of the ordinary parish priest, although not of a priest equipped with the necessary knowledge and time. It is necessary, however, that even the working parish priest should have a thorough grasp of these principles if he is to carry out the more modest task which we must needs assign to him. If he is to be a minister of spiritual health, as he ought to be, he must have a firm grasp of the causes and cure of mental maladjustment. He will then, moreover, know how much he can himself attempt in a given case, and also how to approach it. Such knowledge will give him a wonderfully increased insight into the lives of those with whom he has to deal. "A practitioner, simply by training himself to look at his cases from a psychological standpoint, can add a therapeutic measure of extraordinary potency to his resources. He will come to understand patients who were previously a mystery and a weariness, he will repeatedly succeed in removing their symptoms and correcting their outlook, and will become increasingly able to recognise when a patient is in need of a form of psychological treatment which he has not the time or the training to give." So writes Dr. H. Yellowlees[1] with reference to the general

[1]H. Yellowlees: *Clinical Lectures on Psychological Medicine*, p. 217. The clergy will find this book well worthy of study.

medical practitioner. Most of this statement is, or should be, equally applicable to the parish priest.

Since this book is written primarily for the ordinary parish priest, and not for the psychological expert, we must confine ourselves to those therapeutic activities which are within the competence of any priest who has taken the trouble to study as closely as may be, both in theory and in practice, the principles of psychotherapy. And first of all, we must speak of the place which should be occupied by the confessional in these matters.

As things are at present, it is probable that the bulk of anything which can be dignified by the name of spiritual treatment of morbid states is, so far as the clergy are concerned, given in confession. It must be emphatically stated that the confessional is not the ideal place in which to treat psychological disease. A person goes to confession—or should go—primarily to get "the benefit of absolution" rather than to receive advice. Frequently in neurotic cases there is no time to give advice of such a kind as to be of any real use. It is often better not to attempt to give advice unless there is time to give it adequately, which is usually not the case in the hearing of the confessions of neurotics. There is, moreover, another consideration. In the confessional, the priest of necessity sits as a judge. He delivers judgment in God's name as the representative of the Church. He exercises the power of the keys. This is entirely foreign to the attitude of the psychotherapist, who must never sit as judge. On the contrary, he stands alongside the patient and seeks to assist him to gain an objective and dispassionate view of his problems without any admixture of praise or blame. It follows, therefore, that in dealing with the morbid problems of the persistent masturbator, the scrupulous and the like, the priest should

not be content to leave the treatment to the confessional. What should he do in these and similar cases?

There are two courses open to him. The first possibility is for him to ask leave from the penitent to discuss the question with him at some later time, when there will be an opportunity for a full consideration of the problem, at any rate so far as it is conscious. We shall see shortly the lines upon which such an interview should be conducted. The other course is for the priest to recommend the penitent to seek expert advice and treatment elsewhere, and provide him with the name of a reliable psychotherapist. In some cases, the second course will eventually have to be taken in any case, but there is much to be said for the priest giving such advice as is within his power as a preliminary, even if it should ultimately have to be supplemented. But it should not, in morbid cases, be given in confession for the reasons which we have already stated.

There are, however, many neurotic persons who in any case will not come (at any rate in the first instance) to confession for help. How is the parish priest to help them? Plainly it is desirable, if it is possible, that he should be able to render them what we may call spiritual first aid. This is the more necessary since there is at present no expert help available in many parts of the country; and even when it can be obtained, it is too often beyond the means of the average person. The important question, therefore, arises: Is such a thing as spiritual first aid possible, and, if so, how is it to be given? It is our firm conviction that such a thing is possible, and that every parish priest should have sufficient knowledge to give it.

How is it to be given? We may take as our starting-point the Adlerian psychology, which, in fact, hardly goes deeper than first aid. It is not scientific in a thorough-

going manner as, for example, the Freudian psychology claims to be. It has, however, at least the merit that it works—at any rate as applied to the less complicated cases; for dealing with human nature is always quite as much an art as a science, whoever undertakes the task. We do not suggest that all the clergy should become fanatical Adlerians, but experience has taught us that the parish priest finds much help if he studies Adler's psychology, which is fortunately accessible, for the most part, in English translations, and which is eminently readable and easy to comprehend. A list of Adler's works (in English) can be obtained from any bookseller. We need give only a brief outline of his teaching here.[1]

Adler's doctrine is commonly known as Individual Psychology, because its fundamental axiom is that all cases should be treated as *individuals*. That is to say, there is in each person's life what he calls a "line of life," by which he means a fundamental purpose and striving. If we are to understand any person, we must discover what that is. In the case of neurotics it is always *unrecognised* by the individual himself. It is in this sense of the term that Adler uses the word "unconscious." With neurotics, this life-line is in some way anti-social. The individual is driven on by self-seeking ambition, and when he cannot attain his ends in normal ways he turns (unconsciously) to those which are abnormal. Adler himself does not seem to be religious; indeed, he frankly says that he has no understanding of religion. He, therefore, views the problems of the neurotic as a conflict with society only. It is easy to see, however, that this teaching can be very easily adapted to the point of view of religion. We shall then

[1]A beginning should be made with *What Life should mean to you.*

say that the neurotic is shirking not only the claims of society, but also the claims of God, by following the path of self-love. As we have said in a previous chapter, this has all along been the teaching of the Church.

The essence of adjustment, therefore, according to this method, is to cause the patient to see that he has been unconsciously pursuing the wrong line of life and to lead him to desire with his whole heart the true line. For Adler this is *co-operation* with society, instead of *competition* with it; for a Christian it is co-operation with God and our fellow men. Such was our Lord's plain teaching. He said: "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you: but whosoever would be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all. For verily the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." The whole Christian ideal is enshrined in these words, and they contain the secret which every neurotic has failed to grasp.

The patient, then, has to be brought to see the nature of his line of life. The first task of the priest is, as we have seen, to lead him to *wish* to be enlightened. This will happen, of course, only if he has confidence in the priest and some regard for him. Where these conditions exist, there is every hope of a successful interview; for the kind of first aid which we have in mind can be rendered in two or three conversations. Sometimes even a single interview will suffice. The first thing is for the priest to allow the patient to talk (if he will) about the problem as he sees it. In this way contact between the two of them will be created. This is a vitally important point. After allowing

him to "let off steam" for anything up to half an hour, the priest can then begin to draw out information. He will pay special attention to the following points.

First of all, he will note and bring to the attention of the patient the significance of his place in the family and the bearing which this seems to have upon his problem. There is no need to elaborate this point further here, as it has already been mentioned in the previous chapter. We must add, however, that it is also important to ascertain if the grandparents had much to do with the patient as a child. It frequently happens that they "spoil" their grandchildren and encourage their egocentric phantasies in various ways. Not a few parents seem to forget all that they ever knew about bringing up children by the time that they become grandparents. It is, therefore, frequently necessary to point out to patients the significance of the influence which their grandparents have exerted upon them. In this way the patient will be led back to his early days, where as has been said, the root of the difficulty will always be found. The priest will ask him how far back he can remember, and will seek to elicit from him his earliest recollections. Adler has laid great stress upon this point, and there can be no doubt that in certain cases it may be very revealing. Adler points out that it is surely significant that only one or two incidents have, as a rule, been retained during the first four or five years of life. Why have they been retained? The answer must be, he says, that they made a deep impression upon the mind of the child. In other words, they are not only memories but mementos. They are memorable. They usually appear to be utterly trivial, but experience shows that if they are regarded as *symbolical* of a person's attitude to life they often take on a new meaning. Adler gives numerous in-

stances, and we have from our own experience of dozens of first memories confirmed the truth of his contentions. It is not always advisable for the priest at once to point out to the patient the probable interpretation of his first memory. He must judge whether the person is likely to receive any such interpretation sympathetically. It may be wiser to wait until a later interview and then revert to the matter. But when the priest has discovered it, he will bear it in mind all along and inquire at each point what light it has to shed upon the subject. He will notice especially whether any other *person* is mentioned in this first memory. In such a case there is likely to have been a peculiarly strong emotional connexion, whether of affinity or of alienation, with that person in the past.

It frequently happens that a patient will say that he is unable to remember anything. No attention need be paid to such a remark as this. All that is necessary is to ask the individual concerned to recall *any* incident in childhood. It will usually be possible to go back from this to still earlier memories. Sometimes, again, a patient will recall fictitious memories, going back to the second, or even the first year of life. Fortunately, these are, from the psychological point of view, as significant as memories which are genuine, since they spring from the patient's unconscious phantasies, which will provide, of course, the clue to his life line. In such an interview, by means of a conversation conducted on these lines—which will usually take at least an hour—the priest will frequently be able to form a fairly clear picture of the fundamental errors of the patient; and if he can succeed in making him see anything of that picture, he will have done something, perhaps a great deal, to ease his problems.

A second interview, two or three days later, will often

carry matters a stage further. In such an interview it will be possible to make use of the person's dreams. It is wise to ask him to write down any dreams he may have, before he comes again, impressing upon him the importance of writing them down immediately he wakes. No attempt at dream analysis in the full sense will be made, of course, and it may be that not much help will be afforded by dreams, especially if the case is a difficult one. On the other hand, a single dream may reveal with amazing clearness the patient's unconscious attitude to life. It is worth while, therefore, to bring up the subject, if there is to be a second interview. There is usually no time in a single hour to deal with evidence drawn from this course. It is also advisable to inquire if the patient has any recurrent dream or dreams, and ask him to relate them. They will not be recalled as they were originally dreamed, owing to the influence of repression, but they may nevertheless be very helpful. The patient should be taught the *symbolical* nature of dreams, so that he may learn to understand their significance. Some of the dreams recorded in the Bible, those of Joseph, for example, will provide useful illustrations of this point. A simple way of making the matter clear is to say that a dream is like a cartoon, without the clue written underneath. Apart from this, the cartoon often seems quite nonsensical; but, given the clue, it makes very good sense indeed. Even so a dream should not be dismissed as meaningless nonsense.

A few simple illustrations from our experience will help to make clear the symbolical nature of dreams. One person, who had been repressed by his parents and who had developed a bad stammer on the ground that he felt that nobody wanted him, dreamed that he was an errand boy whistling as he rode on his bicycle. This dream, which

came after a considerable degree of improvement had been attained, well symbolised the attitude of care-free, humble service which the patient was beginning to see as the meaning of life for him. Another person, who was a clergyman, had a dream to the effect that he was fishing, and when he pulled up his line he discerned to his great annoyance that he had caught a donkey. However, he managed to get it off the hook without as much difficulty as he had anticipated. On being asked what was the first thing which a donkey suggested to him, he replied that it was his curate, whom he was anxious to get rid of! The symbolism is fairly clear. Another person dreamed that she was in church and came out to go home. In the churchyard she met a dwarf who offered to drive her back and then refused. She was filled with horror. This woman was an agoraphobia patient who had lost her faith in God. The dwarf suggested death. The symbolism evidently shows that her fear is a fear of death and that if she had only remained in the fold of the Church she would not have been the victim of her fears.

Dreams, as we all know, vary greatly in their complexity. The foregoing examples are all taken from short dreams. Frequently dreams are long and rambling. In such cases the symbolism is naturally more difficult to decipher. Yet a long and patient analysis of a dream will often bring to light a clear symbolism in most unpromising material.[1]

[1]The best elementary book on the interpretation of dreams is almost certainly M. Nicoll's *Dream Psychology*. Unfortunately it is out of print. H. Bannister's *Psychology and Health* (Camb. Univ. Press, 1935), however, contains a very useful brief account of dream interpretation. For a fuller account, Rivers: *Conflict and Dream*, (Kegan Paul 1923), should be consulted. Although there are very many problems awaiting solution in connexion with dream interpretation, the symbolical nature of dreams may be regarded as an established fact, although, unhappily, not one which is generally recognised.

The symbolical nature of dreams provides the answer to those who ridicule the whole idea of dream interpretation on the ground that it is possible to discover so many different interpretations of any given dream. This is inevitable, since it is the essence of a symbol to be susceptible of more interpretations than one, and to transcend any particular interpretation. Thus, for example, the Cross is symbolical to a Christian. That is why no theory of the Atonement has ever been found to be entirely satisfactory. The fact which is symbolised by the Cross defies all attempts to explain it. It is the same, to some degree, with all symbols, including dreams. That is why no single interpretation can exhaust the meaning of a dream. Yet this is not to say that all dream interpretation is useless, or that one explanation is as good as another, any more than it is true to hold that all interpretations of the Cross are equally true. In practice it is possible to discover whether a dream interpretation approximates to the truth by observing how far it fits into the whole context of the patient's life. Thus it follows that there is safety in numbers here, and that the same reliance cannot as a rule be placed upon the interpretation of a single dream as upon a long series of dreams. Nevertheless, sometimes even a single, isolated dream may be very revealing. Dream interpretation, therefore, somewhat resembles the fitting together of the pieces in a jig-saw puzzle. When one has interpreted dozens of dreams belonging to the same person, the results obtained by this pragmatic method become very convincing; always remembering that ultimately it is the patient and not the physician who has to discover and see the interpretation. A wise therapist will be very careful not to dictate, although he must sometimes suggest, interpretations of their dreams to his patients.

Experience shows that individuals vary greatly in their capacity for receiving guidance from their dreams. Some are quite unable to get beyond the idea that a dream is meaningless nonsense, or else that they have explained it when they have accounted for the imagery with which it is clothed by tracing it back to the events of the previous day, or even by recalling what they had to eat just before going to bed. In such cases, it is again true that there are none so blind as those who will not see. Nevertheless, it is usually worth while making any use of dreams which turns out to be practicable. But nothing approaching *analysis* should be attempted in first aid treatment.[1] In such circumstances, all that should be essayed is to ask the "patient" to say what is the first thing which comes into his head when the different pieces of symbolism are mentioned to him. This will not infrequently reveal some meaning in the dream, as in the case, cited above, in which the man caught a donkey with his fishing rod.

Treatment along such lines as these obviously has great limitations. In a severe case, it will not do much good. But the important point is that it cannot do harm. It is not psycho-analysis. It is rather the method of suggestion plus persuasion, looking to the past for the clue to present difficulties. Where no improvement results, the patient should be sent, if possible, for more expert treatment. This will nearly always be necessary in those more difficult cases where there is what Freud has called the "advantage

[1]Analysis involves a long series of interviews in which the contents of the patient's unconscious are brought to light by means of full dream analysis and what is known as free association, in which the patient, lying on a couch, fully expresses whatever comes into his mind, in the presence of the physician. An orthodox Freudian analysis involves some two hundred hours spent in this manner. While not all analyses by any means are necessarily so long, they usually necessitate a fairly prolonged treatment, perhaps thirty or forty hours on an average, the length varying according to the gravity of the case.

through illness," a subject which has already been mentioned but of which more must now be said.

It is important to distinguish carefully between two kinds of "advantage through illness." Freud calls them "internal" and "external" respectively. It is the "external" advantage with which we are particularly concerned now. In *all* cases of psychoneurosis there is an "internal" advantage. In other words, the patient gains something from the point of view of his private and secret life line; otherwise, the neurosis would obviously have no *raison d'être*. For example, the vain man who develops a neurosis preserves his vanity by means of it. The "external" advantage is something quite different. The stock instance is that of the woman who by means of her neurosis contrives to compel her husband to pay her due attention, which apart from it would not be hers. As Adler has said, a neurosis may be a terrible weapon of aggression. A person by means of it may quite easily succeed in dominating a whole household. In such cases, it is plainly going to be far more difficult to bring about an adjustment, because it involves the throwing away of such a valuable and well-tried instrument. In dealing with a psychoneurotic the physician should always make a point of trying to see whether any such external advantage is visible. Where this is the case, resistance is likely to be stubborn, and a prolonged course of treatment will nearly always be necessary. In these circumstances, the patient will require expert handling, which will be beyond the powers of the parish priest.

It is our firm conviction that there is a great opportunity for the clergy, if they will rise to the present situation. There is a very large number of psychoneurotics in the world, and not a few of them find their way to the con-

fessional. In addition to this, there are neurotic tendencies in many persons who may fairly be styled "normal." Moreover, as things are at present, the number of medical men who are capable of dealing with such persons is very small indeed. There is, therefore, plainly an opening for the Church, if it will avail itself of it before it is too late. If this opportunity is not seized, the time will come when the medical profession will awake to the situation, and in those days the psychoneurotic will look to medicine rather than to religion for the help he needs. We should well weigh the following words of Dr. Jung: "The wave of interest in psychology which is at present sweeping over the Protestant countries of Europe is far from receding. It is coincident with the general exodus from the Church."[1] The tragedy of the present situation is that this wave ought to be sweeping men and women into the Church instead of carrying them away from it.

[1]C. G. Jung: *op. cit.*, p. 263.

CHAPTER III

SOME MORBID TYPES

IT cannot be said too clearly that we do not suggest that the priest without expert knowledge should attempt to treat all the types of psychopathy to be described in this chapter, or indeed any of them in their advanced forms. But even a book knowledge of these morbid conditions should be of value to every "spiritual physician," if only to help him in the task of diagnosis, with a view to passing the patient on to some competent person for treatment.

It is important, we may notice in passing, to distinguish carefully between *psychoneurosis* and *psychosis*. The difference is this: the neurotic patient is aware that his symptoms *are* symptoms—that, in a word, he is a sick soul; whereas the psychotic has lost (at any rate during the periods when his symptoms are displaying themselves) the capacity for "insight"[1] into his condition and its significance. No other distinction is practically useful: least of all any theory based on hypothetical alterations in brain structure and so forth. It may be presumed that no changes occur in consciousness which are not registered in the brain; but in neither the neurosis nor the psychoses can these latter be measured. A neurotic knows, or can be brought to see, that he is ill; a psychotic cannot: that is the thing to remember. The priest, therefore, encountering a man or woman whose views are, not merely confused,

[1]A technical term in this connexion.

but obviously incompatible—though it may be only slightly so—with reality, may rightly suspect that he is dealing with a psychosis, which is unlikely to yield to psychotherapeutic treatment by himself or anyone else. An example or two will make this distinction clear. A man suffering from an obsession—under a continual compulsion, for example, to wash his hands, or to touch every lamp-post he passes, or to go through some grotesque ceremonial, for example with the clock or the pillows, before he gets into bed every night, or to avoid empty railway compartments—will recognise, and indeed insist, that his performance of these acts is meaningless and unnecessary; though he simply has to do them, and cannot help himself. He is suffering from a psychoneurosis. A man, on the other hand, who shrinks from the company of others on the ground that someone—or everyone—is on the look-out to do him an injury, and cannot be shaken out of this conviction by any argument or exposure of its obvious improbability, is the victim of a psychosis. He has lost contact, at least to this extent, with the world of reality. He may determine, his friend (or the world) being, as he thinks, against him, to get in first; he may put poison into someone else's tea before they have a chance of putting it into his![1]

The methods of treatment appropriate to such psychopathic states as those now to be described have been suggested in the previous chapter.

1. *Scepticism.*

A celebrated contemporary evangelist is credited with

[1]It should be added that it is not always easy to tell—*e.g.* in melancholia—whether a person has "insight" or not; it may require a long conversation to do so.

the *dictum* that "there are no intellectual problems, only moral ones." This is not utter nonsense—though nearly so. But no psychologist would quarrel with the assertion that there are few intellectual problems which do not depend to a greater or less degree on psychological factors; and the pastor, consulted by a man or woman with "difficulties" about the Faith, should always bear this in mind. Unbelief is not necessarily sinful: less so, very often, than certain kinds of "faith" falsely so called. Nor is genuine and honest doubt morally blameworthy.

The previous chapter has stressed the importance of early environment. An example within our experience will illustrate the importance of this in the present connexion. An intelligent woman of thirty-five, happily married to a devout husband, was greatly troubled because she "could not" believe. In conversation with the priest whom she consulted, it did not appear that her doubts were very articulate; she seemed almost to be raising problems and questions for the sake of doing so: to be putting herself, as it were, "agin the government" because that was the role she was expected to fill, not because she had any real grievance. The thing she rebelled against most was going to church with her husband and children; only very rarely could she be cajoled into going at all, and then her mind would be obsessed, throughout the service, either with anger at the unreality and "mummery" of what was going on, or with self-reproach for her own hypocrisy. It transpired, in the course of some inquiries into her childhood, that her parents had brought her up in a sort of spiritual hothouse. From her earliest years, not only had her private devotions been strictly regimented, but she had shared in her parents' rather self-conscious observance of fast and festival, of public wor-

ship and private "offices." The walls and mantelpiece of her nursery were full of pious pictures and images. Recalling all this, there suddenly flashed into the woman's consciousness the memory of a night when, after she had said her lengthy and prescribed devotions at her mother's knee, and after her mother had put out the light and left the room, she had sprung out of bed and, standing in front of a picture of our Lord, hot, angry tears of resentment and rebellion streaming down her cheeks, had beaten upon the picture with her hands, crying, in a voice which could not be heard outside the room: "I hate you! I hate you!" Discussing this incident, the woman had no doubt whatever that her agnosticism *malgré lui* represented a regression to this and similar childish protests.

In some cases the influences of childhood work rather differently. Thus, a man who had never heard religion or the Deity referred to by his parents save with a gibe or a sneer, and had been brought up on the crudest mid-nineteenth-century rationalism, suddenly realised, as the result of his friendship with a Christian friend, how half-baked and obsolete his theories were. The result, however, was not to turn him towards the Faith, but to urge him to acquire a new and up-to-date anti-Christian armoury. This man had enough psychological knowledge, as it happened, to recognise what he was doing: namely, that he was *rationalising*—finding reasons for intellectual beliefs which were really the result, not of reason, but of the desire to perpetuate the influence of his parents. Such insight is not always to be found, particularly in those—by no means uncommon—cases in which adult scepticism in religious matters, together with a general attitude of rebellion against external authority and a studied disregard of convention, is to be traced to a repressed Œdipus

Complex. Successful revolt is the most obvious form in which the chance of "getting equal" with his father suggests itself to the unconscious of the small boy, and there can be no doubt that many cases of scepticism represent fixation in this childish attitude. In the jargon of the schools, God, clergymen, teachers, policemen, superior officers and employers are so many kinds of "father-surrogate." It should be added that the situation here described is not dependent upon, though it may be aggravated by, experience of an *actual* father. The word "father" has associations of its own even for a child born after his father's death, or whose father dies while he is an infant. It is said that the "father-image" is one of those *primordial mental patterns* which form part of every individual's racial inheritance. Indeed, that in some cases, it is

> "as if the absence of a real objective father has permitted a free and unfettered development of the imago pattern, and it seems to be the fact that fatherless individuals are more susceptible to the development of father imago feelings than those in whom actual experience of the father is able to cause their modification."[1]

In the cases just quoted the intellectual difficulties involved were of a generalised kind. Sometimes they are specific. Teachers tell us, for example, of the barrier to faith which may be set up, in the mind of a child who has been ill-treated at home, by the thought of God as "Father." The cases (presumably those which the evangelist quoted at the beginning of this section had in mind) in which scepticism represents the self-protective rationalisation of sloth, or of self-centredness, or of a moral stand-

[1]Graham Howe: *Motives and Mechanisms of the Mind*, p. 99.

ard even below that of the individual's social group, are too obvious to need discussion.

2. *Scrupulosity.*

The scrupulous patient or penitent, unlike the law, ***de minimis curat.*** Scrupulosity may go to preposterous lengths. A private secretary on the right side of middle age was rendered practically useless both to his employer and himself by an excess of "conscientiousness" which compelled him to take hours over the composition of a letter answering some trivial request, and to spend so much time, when sent on an errand in the City, deciding which were the quickest possible routes there and back, that it became impossible to give him such tasks. He could not accept invitations to spend week-ends away from home, because the business of packing could not be done in the time available for it. Before any article could be put into the bag, the question had to be asked and answered, whether it was really likely to be wanted, or whether something else would not be more useful. This patient, by the time he sought advice, had reached the point when he could come to no decisions on any matter whatever. This uncertainty, like the rest of his symptoms, was defended on the ground that full and proper deliberation is a necessary duty, if one is to have a clear conscience. Other people, indeed—his employer and his family, for example—seemed to come to terms with their conscience without much difficulty; but for him no such easy compromise was possible. A typical factor in cases of scrupulosity emerges here: namely, a hypercritical attitude—sometimes ostentatiously admitted—towards others.

Repression is invariably involved; sometimes of an awareness of personal failure or inadequacy, in which case the effect of the scruple is not merely to save the patient from self-reproach, but to give him the reputation (in however small a *milieu*) of possessing a more tender and delicate moral sense than others; sometimes of egoism, which then disguises itself as hypersensitiveness over trifles. Fear, too, has been at work: simple fear, it may be, of another's authority and power, or resentment at his success; open and active rebellion being hopeless or impossible, the fear turns in on itself, as it were, and achieves a perverted satisfaction by heroic efforts to overcome adversaries which do not disturb other people's peace of mind.[1]

The pastoral treatment of scrupulosity is well known. In simple cases, the penitent should be told that his mind is sick: that his conscience is temporarily diseased: and that the first condition of recovery is that he should obey implicitly the directions of his spiritual physcian. These directions may include a prohibition of frequent or minute self-examination, and injunctions designed to turn the penitent's prayer-life away from himself towards God; to this end, he should be encouraged to concentrate on worship and intercession, and instructed as to the nature and priority of liturgical prayer. If he observes a rule of life, it will certainly require revision in the direction of laxity. It should be pointed out to him, of course, that scrupulosity is a subtle form of pride. For every penitent scrupulous in regard to the second half of the Great Com-

[1]It should be added that there is evidence that in some cases the exaggerated attention given by many very young children, at the instance of their mothers, to the absolute regularity and meticulous cleanliness of their excretory functions, may occasionally serve as a contributory factor in the formation of a neurosis of scrupulosity.

mandment, ninety-nine will be found obsessed with worries about their "duty towards God," interpreted solely in terms of mediation and recollectedness and grace before meat. Extreme conditions of scrupulosity will require psychotherapeutic treatment, along lines indicated in the previous chapter; the parish priest will not consider himself competent to give this himself. Such pathological scrupulosity is a species of compulsive or obsessional neurosis, in which the patient feels himself obliged to perform some act or series of actions, irrational in themselves, and recognised by him as such in his saner moments, though he will often seek to justify them (*cf.* the secretary referred to above). The obsessional neuroses constitute one of the most stubborn problems of the psychotherapist; many of them respond temporarily to prolonged treatment, but the probabilities of relapse are considerable.

3. *Recidivism.*

The recidivist is the despair of the confessor, who is never, perhaps, so tempted to impatience as when, having dreaded that the next confession of one of his penitents of this type might reveal, once more, the relapses of which he has heard so often, he finds his worst anticipations realised.

Certain important distinctions may be drawn.[1]

1. *Physiological and psychological recidivism.* Alcoholism and drug addiction are the most obvious examples of the former, which is the consequence of physico-chemical

[1]In what follows we have drawn freely upon *A Manual of Pastoral Psychology*, pp. 140 ff, 171 ff.

degeneration of the organism. The patient's "will" is powerless. In psychological recidivism, on the other hand, the patient's will is divided; he is torn between the opposing forces of good and evil; the problem here is the reinforcement of the weaker, good-seeking elements in his personality.

2. *Mild and acute forms of (psychological) recidivism.* In the latter—true kleptomania is a good example—the will of the patient is as helpless as that of the physiological recidivist; no efforts of his own will help him, though his case is likely to respond to psychotherapeutic treatment. The essential feature of the mild recidivist's condition is suggestibility—"How happy could I be with either, Were t'other fair charmer away." He succumbs as easily to temptation as he does, in its absence, to its antithesis.

3. *Sentiment-recidivism and habit-recidivism.* The former of these terms refers to those types in which the sinner's relapses are the result, not of a casual temptation or of being temporarily off his guard, but of his long-standing and all but irresistible attachment to someone or something which represents, for him, an "occasion of sin." The so-called "habitual" drunkard is, under this classification, a case of sentiment—and *not* of habit-recidivism; he falls, not because he will not exert himself to resist, but because he cannot resist; he is in bonds, the victim of "moral disease."

The last of these distinctions is the one of most practical importance to the spiritual physician. He should know how to recognise it. If, for example, the penitent tells him that, at the time of the commission of the sin, he has next to no awareness of its sinfulness, or if the sin (for example, that of masturbation) is accompanied by strongly-toned phantasies, the priest may take it that he is deal-

ing with a recidivism based on sentiments and not on habits. In severe and intractable cases, he will have recourse to expert psychotherapeutic aid where it may be obtained. He will always strive to be gentle and understanding, and will seek above all to get the penitent to share his own boundless faith and confidence in the power of God to achieve even the apparently impossible.

4. *Anxiety-States.*

A great variety of symptoms is comprised under this head. The patient may complain that he is troubled with a general and undefined "nervousness," or recurrent moods of depression, or a sense of the emptiness and futility of life in general and of his own life in particular, or gaucherie and awkwardness in society, or irritability and bad temper out of all proportion to the triviality of their occasions, or petty and unreasonable fears which have assumed such proportions that they dominate the whole of his life and make it impossible for him to give proper attention to his work or his family or his social duties. In the vast majority of cases these psychological symptoms are accompanied by some physical trouble—headaches, giddiness, ear-noises, sleeplessness, pains in various parts of the body, exhaustion: sometimes by sexual impotence or anæsthesia. The patient, when he first seeks advice, will almost invariably assert his conviction that all his symptoms are the result of some organic trouble. A doctor ignorant of psychology may have encouraged this conviction. But no treatment along psychotherapeutic lines should be attempted until the subject has undergone an exhaustive medical examination, which should

include pathological tests of his blood, urine, etc. Only when the result of this examination is known to be negative is it profitable to explain to the patient that his fears and anxieties are primary and his physical symptoms secondary, and that both arise from "ideas"—and almost certainly from ideas belonging to past experiences or conditions which themselves form, now, no part of the conscious furniture of his mind.

This, then, is the first condition of successful treatment: a medical examination so thorough that the patient shall have no excuse for refusing to examine into the real source of his troubles. In many cases, of course, this excuse dies very hard. Thus, a clergyman whose ungovernable bouts of gloom and irritability, coupled with threats of suicide, made him a burden to his devoted wife and children, persuaded himself that some obscure poison existed in his system which it was simply beyond the power of present-day medical science to detect: it *must* be so! Like so many others, he ascribed the origin of this toxic influence to auto-erotic and homosexual practices in his childhood and adolescence; this theory gave him, as the reader will observe, an excellent excuse for regarding his present self as blameless in regard to the effect of his depression on others. In point of fact—as this patient came to realise in the course of treatment—his present depressions and his early auto-eroticism *were* connected, though not in the way he supposed: they were both (as so often) symbolic methods of asserting himself, ways of registering his protest against inhibiting circumstances. The masturbation meant: "This at any rate I can do, and derive satisfaction from doing, and no one can stop me." When he came for treatment, his economic circumstances made it necessary for him to do his work in a small, in-

convenient house, with inadequate domestic help, involving unpunctual meals, untended children and a general atmosphere of confusion and "all-on-top-of-one-another." His fundamental decency and reasonableness made him recognise that all this was largely inevitable, and that no one could be blamed for it; and his tempers meant: "If I can't have things as I like them, at least other people shan't always have me as they like me!" His symptoms were, in short, a form of spiritual auto-erotism.

Dr. T. A. Ross[1] has shown how the theory of the "conditioned reflex" may be applied to anxiety states.

> "An emotional reaction, first aroused by a certain mental event, tends afterwards to be aroused by another mental event which has become associated with the first one."[2]

The emotional tone attaching to the secondary event belongs in reality, that is to say, to the first one.[3] A simple example is that of the ex-soldier who is thrown into a sweat of fear by the slightest noise. Noise is associated in his mind with gunfire-plus-fear, with the result that he has become "conditioned" to experience fear at the stimulus of noise-minus-gunfire: just as Pavlov's mice, accustomed to the sound of a bell whenever food was placed before them, became "conditioned" to produce saliva-flow (a purely mechanical response to the sight of food) at the stimulus of bell-minus-food.

Dr. Ross points out that everyone is familiar with the appearance, in health, of forms of behaviour which, in

[1] *The Common Neuroses*, p. 148.
[2] Henderson and Gillespie: *Text-Book of Insanity*, p. 408
[3] According to the law of the Transference of the Affect: *cf. supra* p. 202.

disease, are recognised as symptoms. Thus the nurse or the medical student may faint at their first operation, and fainting is due to temporary mal-functioning of the heart; but there is really nothing the matter with the student's heart. A man may vomit at the mere sight of an insect in his food—may be as sick, in fact, as if he had actually swallowed it and had something to be sick about! Or, once more, worry and anxiety may produce precisely the same symptoms as indigestion. In all these cases, the symptoms of organic disease represent emotional reactions: they are produced by *the presence of an experience*—or, as we have seen in the previous paragraph, of an association—*charged with emotion.* The symptoms of the anxiety-state, writes Dr. Ross,

> "are identical with those which in health are called the emotional reaction; except only that they are prolonged, whereas those of the reaction are temporary. The stimulus for the reaction, and therefore for the symptom, may apparently be one which in itself is not ordinarily a cause of emotion; but it will be found that it has become associated with some incident which was essentially connected with emotion, so that a usually innocuous stimulus causes the reaction 'conditionally.'"[1]

The milder forms of anxiety-neurosis are those most likely to be encountered by the parson, and he should be capable of dealing with them along the lines suggested in this chapter and the last. The prognosis in such cases is good, and the cure sometimes fairly rapid. At the first interview, the patient should be allowed to tell his story and describe his symptoms in his own way. He should then be asked to state how recently the symptoms began,

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 148.

and to make an effort to recall the emotional and psychological circumstances of *the last attack.* This will be discussed in detail, and the patient will be helped to realise that the symptoms were wholly disproportionate to the occasion which produced them: they were due, in fact, to an unconscious *misinterpretation* of the occasion. Why be anxious or fearful about *that*?—what was there *there* to produce palpitations or sweating or a bursting sensation in the head? Previous attacks may then be dealt with in the same way, the patient and his helper collaborating throughout in the task of correlating the symptoms and their concomitants in the former's mind. As he thus grows in self-knowledge, the patient becomes more capable, with each onset of his symptoms, of recognising their real meaning, and of reminding himself that—now as in the past—they are far from being what they seem.

In many of these cases it will be found that the patient's religious beliefs and practices are themselves part of his neurosis. Here the value of treatment at the hand of one who is a spiritual physician as well as a psychologist is evident. It is very important that religion should not be presented to the patient as *primarily* a psychotherapeutic instrument. There are frequent temptations to make this mistake; but the results may be disastrous. Religious acts and formulæ have immense suggestive force, and to use them in this way, without uncovering the deep-seated causes of the patient's symptoms, may result in his falling from one form of neurosis into another. Exchanges of neuroses for "religion" are quite as common as developments of "religion" into a neurosis! But, bearing in mind these dangers, the spiritual physician will make wise use of his opportunities of correcting those false, irrational or infantile conceptions of God which he may confidently

expect to find in the mind of his patient; he will often ask the patient to consider the implications of his religious practices and conventions, and will seek to rebuild and reinforce his whole attitude to God. He will never, of course, while bearing in mind what was said in the last chapter about the psychotherapist's duty of refraining from criticism and blame, conceal from any patient his own conviction that full integration of personality is impossible except on the basis of a personal, conscious and persistent relationship to God. He will not pretend, that is to say, to believe that there are more names than One whereby men may be "saved" from perversion and futility and sin. Nevertheless, any explicit exposition of these convictions will only come, as a rule, in the later stages of the treatment rather than the earlier.

5. *Sexual Aberrations.*

1. *Auto-erotism.* There are signs of an increasingly reasonable attitude to this subject on the part of psychologists. It was common, until recently, to find writers who reacted so violently against the conventional view that they affirmed that auto-erotic practices were utterly harmless, and even salutary. This is pestilent nonsense. It is true that masturbation, practised in moderation, will not drive a youth insane, or cause his spine to crumble away, or give him venereal disease. Nevertheless, the practice is, as Dr. William Brown categorically asserts, harmful both to men and women:

> "the habit is bad and ought to be shunned. All self-fixation is harmful. . . . It is like short-circuiting an electric main. The energy, sexual and mental, passes in a short

> circuit from the side of stimulus to the side of response, instead of passing through all other systems and enriching the growing mind."[1]

What is needed is a sense of proportion: the fact that this is generally lacking in the masturbator himself makes it all the more necessary that anyone who tries to help him should possess it. In nine cases out of ten, the following factors are involved.

i. Fear of the imagined consequences. This may have reached desperate proportions, and, in some cases, merely to discuss the whole situation calmly with an older person who receives the confidence calmly, and evidently feels no doubt whatever that the trouble may be overcome, may have marvellous and rapid results.

ii. A so-called "inferiority complex." Nearly all authorities are agreed that the habit is a form of "masculine protest," as in the case referred to on p. 243. If a masturbator be asked to recall the events, exterior and interior, of the twelve hours preceding any given fall into this sin, he will nearly always be able to remember some failure, some snub, or some opposition to his own desires; in such cases, the auto-erotic act represents his unconscious means of "getting his own back."

iii. Despair: the result of interior conflict, "generated by" the vicious circle of "sexual desire, its furtive satisfaction, fear of detection, then the pressure of remorse after each act of self-indulgence."[2]

iv. An acute sense of guilt. A large number of psychoneurotics (especially "anxiety" cases) are wont to attribute all their troubles to auto-erotic practices in the past. But a very marked feeling of guilt is present in most cases

[1] *Psychology and Psychotherapy*, pp. 116-117.
[2] *A Manual of Pastoral Psychology*, p. 153.

which could not be described as neurotic; indeed, it is almost universal among masturbators, even when no particular effort is made to control the habit. (It is partly this concomitant of guilt-feeling which makes the habit injurious.) This sense of guilt is, no doubt, in large part a consequence of society's repression of all matters relating to sex. From his earliest years the small child is more than likely to have been taught, by word and example and the *argumentum e silentio*, that he must maintain an absolute silence about such matters, however great his interest in them or his desire for enlightenment about such things, for example, as his own sexual organs, or the arrival of an addition to the family; and he comes to fear that some huge, unnamed disaster will befall him if he wittingly infringes this taboo.[1] These secrecies and apprehensions are the stock-in-trade, as is well known, of the quack and the charlatan,[2] whose activities accentuate still further the masturbator's sense of guilt, which in many cases is increased by furtive methods of "treatment" and "cure." The first thing, beyond all question, is to bring the trouble into the light of day.

But more remains to be said. Whence comes the special and peculiar abhorrence in which, not all sexual offences, but *this particular* sexual offence is commonly held? Why does the psychoneurotic of licentious life fix on *this* as the cause of his trouble? Because, no doubt, of the standards

[1]Sometimes this fear is quite explicit, as when a small boy is threatened with castration by a nurse or parent seeking to divert his (perfectly natural) interest in his own body. On the other hand, "it is highly improbable that the threat of castration has been delivered as often as would appear from the analysis of a neurotic. We are content to understand that the child concocts a threat of this kind out of its knowledge that auto-erotic satisfactions are forbidden, on the basis of hints and allusions." (Freud, quoted by Crichton Miller, *Psychology and Its Derivatives*, p. 60).

[2]Some of the "health" and "physical culture" literature displayed on railway and other bookstalls is not without significance in this connexion.

of his "herd," which condone fornication but condemn masturbation. But why? It cannot be said that there is any short and simple answer to this question. That of the orthodox psycho-analysts is well known. They tell us that the Law of the Transference of Affect is in operation here; the *real* cause of the guilt, in the cases we are considering, is an unconscious, "incestuous" childish desire for the mother and hatred of the father, which have been repressed. The universal taboo attaching to masturbation is explained along the same lines; it is irrational and unnecessary in civilised communities, but served a biologically and socially useful purpose in its original form, as society's protection against incest.

The explanation of "guilt-complexes" by the Adlerian school is less complicated. "In the majority of neurotic cases," says Adler himself: "the fact is that a guilt-complex is used as a means to fix its maker on the useless side of life" (*Problems of Neurosis*, p 24), and he quotes the case of a boy who ascribed his failure to pass his examinations to his absorbing self-reproaches in regard to his auto-erotic temptations—which always became most acute as an examination was approaching!

Where the practice of masturbation belongs to the "sentiment-recidivism" type, therapeutic treatment is likely to be necessary. Where no more than a "habit" is involved, two pieces of advice should be given. In the first place, the patient should be urged, at the first onset of temptation, to occupy himself *at once* with something (a cross-word puzzle, the writing of a letter, the search for something whose exact whereabouts he does not know, the memorising of a piece of *prose*) which will absorb his attention. Secondly, he should practise auto-suggestion. In the drowsy moments before going to sleep, and imme-

diately on awaking, he should lie with limbs completely relaxed and repeat mechanically, though deliberately and articulately, some such rhythmical phrase as "this habit is losing its hold on me" twenty or thirty times. The spiritual physician will of course supplement such purely psychological remedies by dwelling upon the power of Grace: or rather, he will speak first of the Holy Spirit, and, secondly, of ways in which we may co-operate with His work in our souls. He will preserve, as we have said, his sense of proportion; for example, in hearing confessions in which this sin is mentioned, he will not single it out for comment when giving counsel: in many cases he will do well not to refer to it directly at all. And he will bear in mind the futility and danger of trying to frighten or bully people out of this sin.

2. *Homosexuality.* Three things must be distinguished. (1) Bisexuality: the capacity (though not an equal capacity) for distinctively sexual feeling, in the presence of appropriate stimuli, for persons of either sex. (2) Sexual inversion: the incapacity, *ab initio*, for sexual feeling except for persons of one's own sex. (3) Homosexuality: the marked preference, in matters of sex, for persons of one's own sex. It is obvious that this may exist in varying degrees. We do not classify the "clubbable bachelor", or the adolescent boy who has "no use for girls", as "morbid" types; and strictly pathological homosexuality is much rarer than is commonly supposed. Even when it exists, it may be—and in the majority of cases no doubt is—rigidly controlled, so far at least as overt acts are concerned. This is a point which should always be made by any priest dealing with a penitent who has fallen into gross sin of this kind: "You must and can learn self-

control—like other people, in this matter as in all else."[1]

Of the influences tending to produce homosexuality three may be mentioned: they may be involved together or in isolation in any given case. In the first place, the possibility of an œdipus situation must be borne in mind, a man's unconscious (*i.e.* repressed) "mother fixation" preventing him from being emotionally attracted by other women, and causing his sexual impulses to be turned inwards, as it were, towards his own sex. (Homosexuality of this type may itself be repressed, and its place taken by auto-erotism). Secondly, there is evidence—not much, it is true—that excess of thymus secretion may sometimes be a contributory factor, producing, as it does, abnormalities of the "secondary sex characters:" for example, scantiness of pubic hair in men, and in women traces of beard on the face. Finally, the "masculine protest" may express itself as homosexuality, which in that case signifies either a desire to exert power over others by being as unlike them as possible, or fear of the other sex.

A word or two may be said here about a problem on which the clergy are not infrequently asked to advise: the problem sometimes created by an intimate friendship between two women. It is probable that, in cases in which the situation is aggravated by overt sexual acts, one at least of the women concerned is to some extent genuinely inverted. But a situation like the following is not uncommon: Miss A., an unmarried woman of thirty-six, tells her parish priest that she is much distressed at a breach which has appeared in the friendship between herself and Miss B., a woman of three or four years older,

[1]Such self-control will of course be specially difficult where the penitent is a sentiment-recidivist, and so the victim of "moral disease." Such cases can only be successfully treated by psychotherapeutic means.

also unmarried. Miss B. has lately showed signs of jealousy: has complained that her love seems unreturned: and has demanded that Miss A. shall give up most of her other friends in order to devote the whole of her time and attention to her. Miss A. may add that she seems lately to have noticed, in her friend's outward expressions of affection, a tone and quality which has not been there hitherto, which she does not like, and which she can only describe as definitely sexual; Miss B. has taken, for example, to kissing her, and kissing her passionately, on the lips. What ought Miss A. to do about it? She does not want to lose Miss B.'s friendship; on the other hand, she could not endure it along the lines which Miss B. seems to wish it to take.

The answer to Miss A. is easy—for the adviser to give, though not for her to accept. There must be a separation, at least temporary, between herself and her friend, in order to give the latter a chance of "sublimating" her emotional energy, which she is most unlikely to be able to do so long as the stimulus of Miss A.'s presence remains. This separation need not be permanent, and Miss A. should point this out to Miss B., while explaining that the reason why she proposes it, and indeed insists on it, is that Miss B.—as she surely recognises herself?—is becoming altogether too exacting, possessive and dependent.

The real problem, of course, is Miss B.; she is the partner whose psychological make-up needs investigation and attention. The fundamental fact is that her "love" is of an immature and even infantile type. In her relations to Miss A.—showering attention and solicitude and possibly gifts upon her—she is simply the little girl insuring herself against mother's displeasure by "being good:" by fetching and carrying and doing more than she need:

by works of supererogation. "What a good girl am I!" "How can mummy help loving me?" And, just as the little girl traded on her mother's affection, and made certain of constant expressions of it by displays of misery and desolation when such expressions were not forthcoming with sufficient frequency and intensity, so Miss B. trades on her friend's affection now. There may, of course, be other causative factors in the situation. Miss B.'s jealousy is certainly a component part of her "love:" that is to say, the very extravagance with which she seeks to emphasise the disinterested quality of her affection has the effect of disguising its real, possessive, exclusive, exacting nature.

If the adviser were able to interview Miss B., he would probably discover that, though without any suspicion of its causes, she is not unaware of the self-centredness of her affection for Miss A., or of the essentially sexual character of its latest manifestations. The latter realisation is likely to be accompanied by profound feelings of shame and guilt. The adviser's first task will be to do what he can to mitigate these feelings. He will try to get her to see the situation as clearly and objectively as possible. He will point out that economic conditions in the modern world, together with the preponderance of women over men, make it inevitable that large numbers of women should find themselves debarred from finding, in marriage and motherhood, their natural destiny. The sexual impulses of such women—and she is one of them—must either be sublimated, or repressed, or directly satisfied. In Miss B.'s case, the course taken has been a form of direct and explicit sexuality. But the course can be altered: channels and opportunities for sublimation can be found: and no shame or guilt rightly attaches (as she obviously imagines

that it does) either to the possession of sexual instincts, or to temptation. It may be added that she should be urged to seek to enlarge the circle of her feminine acquaintances. "The more friends a single woman has, the more likely is her chief friendship to flourish and endure."[1]

3. *Sadism and Masochism.* Much less is known about the ætiology of these perversions than the abundance of literature on the subject (much of it pseudo-scientific and even pornographic in character) would suggest. But one or two considerations may help us to understand what is at first sight unintelligible.

But is it, after all, so unintelligible? To begin with, a little reflexion will convince most people that there are in normal human nature "instincts" of aggression and submission, which we can conceive being subjected to such over-encouragement as to produce, either so gross a degree of self-assertion as to make a person actually rejoice in the sufferings and humiliations he inflicts on others, or so complete a self-repression as to make him indifferent to any pains and slights endured at the hands of his fellows.

Further, biological necessity would seem to support the psycho-analytic view that the willingness to inflict pain, and the willingness to endure it, are "components" of the sexual instinct: normally, of male and female sexuality respectively, of man the pursuer and woman the pursued. Thirdly, it does not seem unreasonable to suppose—indeed, it is perfectly obvious—that strong and deep repressions (in the technical sense of that word) are necessary, not merely of definite incest-wishes, but of feelings of hate and resentment generally, if the child is to come

[1] *The Emotional Problems of the Single Woman*, by Dr. Laura Hutton. The last three paragraphs owe much to this book, though we are very far from subscribing to all Dr. Hutton's conclusions.

to any sort of terms with his world of parents and parent-"surrogates." The child screaming and struggling in impotent fury in the restraining grasp of its mother is a potential sadist: he would certainly injure her if he could. His future happiness depends on his control of these primitive impulses. He is fortunate if this control proceeds wholly on the conscious level, and along the lines of finding sublimations for his destructive impulses.

It is largely on the evidence provided by the study of children[1] that one widely-accepted view of the significance of sadistic and masochistic perversions in adults is based. It is suggested that the child's feelings of destructiveness and hate are—for reasons just indicated—repressed. This does not mean, however, that they are destroyed; failing satisfactory sublimation along approved and socially respectable channels,[2] they will express themselves in later life in a disguised form. In sadism and masochism, the disguise amounts to positive transformation: unconsciously persisting infantile hatred is now directed inwards (masochism)[3], or (sadism) against persons unrecognisable as substitutes for the original parents, nurses, teachers, older brothers and sisters and so on. That this transformation should find a sexual expression[4] may seem strange—until

[1]See Culpin: *Recent Advances in the Study of the Psychoneuroses*, p. 306, for authorities.

[2]e.g., a healthy approval of capital punishment and the cat-o'-nine-tails, or a determination to stand no bolshie nonsense from 'niggers' or miners!

[3]Thus completely concealing its real character and protecting the individual against a sense of guilt. It should be added that, in Freud's view, the "Super-ego" (Conscience)—a conception arrived at largely by inference from the sense of guilt common in neurotics—owes its existence and its strength to an instinct of aggressiveness which is turned inwards because circumstances will not permit it to be externalised, and which, thus introjected, supplements the authority of parents etc.

[4]The essence of these perversions is the sexual satisfaction accompanying them—or to which (by way of masturbation) they may be relied on to lead.

we remember the tendency of *any* strong emotion to do so: the well-known affinities between sexuality and art, sexuality and religion, sexuality and genius, are instructive here.

It should be added that, on this view, the sado-masochist is paying the price for not being the victim of an obsessional neurosis!—the significance of the latter being that it is an attempt to ward off, by punctilious performance of some ritual (often rationalised as a precaution taken on behalf of others), the resurgence of precisely these repressed infantile reactions, with their accompanying sense of guilt.

The "Individual Psychology" of Adler has a simpler hypothesis—perhaps too simple. These perversions, like homosexuality, are an expression of the masculine protest. Their victims find a perverted satisfaction in adopting "a negative attitude towards the role proper to their sex"[1]: an attitude unconsciously designed to supplement their "character-line" as this is disclosed by psycho-analytical examination. In this way, if in no other, they can and will be different from their fellows! It is noteworthy that many sadochistic men are impotent, and women anæsthetic, in normal intercourse. They are confident, on the other hand, that marriage would "put them right." In other words, their condition provides them with a satisfactory excuse for not taking the only step which would, as they think, cure them.

Sadism and masochism in their graver manifestations are rarely expressed in overt acts involving the participation of a partner or partners: convention and the law see to that. Solitary masochistic acts are more common: sometimes leading—as an occasional inquest reveals—to

[1]Allers: *The Psychology of Character*, p. 265.

fatal results. The absolute repression, by society, of any overt practice of either of these perversions may be partly responsible for two facts: first, that many victims of them, in the form of obsessional thoughts and phantasies, are both sadistic and masochistic; and secondly, for the terrible and persistent force which such phantasies may take. How terrible, and how utterly debilitating, only those know who have tried to help these unhappy souls.

Additional Note on the Transference

Anyone seeking to help a psychoneurotic patient, along the lines described in this chapter and the previous one, is likely to find himself confronted, before the treatment has proceeded far, with what at first seems a serious obstacle. He may discover that the patient, whether man or woman, is displaying a strong emotional attitude towards himself. This may express itself as love or as hate, or as a see-saw between the two. It may assume extreme and even violent outward forms, as when a patient makes protestations of passionate love—or, of contempt and dislike. On the other hand, it may not go beyond an exaggerated deference to the helper's opinions, a rigid punctuality, a solicitous concern for his health and convenience, a somewhat ostentatious admiration of his house and the decoration of his room—or, an obstinate refusal to co-operate, a persistent "forgetting" of appointments, a hardly-concealed doubt of the helper's competence, a calculated rudeness, expressing itself in the patient's omitting to take his hat off or to wipe his feet.

Mildly or acutely, in either a "positive" or "negative"

form, this phenomenon is certain to show itself,[1] and, unless it is understood and rightly handled, it will wreck all chances of successful treatment. It is called the "transference." The word was coined by Freud in order to indicate his view that these expressions of love or hate, so far from originating in the present relationship between the patient and his physician, are "transferred" to the latter from situations in the patient's past. Evidence is produced, by exponents of this view, to show that the transference constitutes a regression—usually, to infantile experience; expressed in another way, it represents the persistence, in the patient's unconscious, of repressed feelings of "love" and "hate" towards his parents and their "surrogates" in his childhood. The treatment tends to loosen these repressions, and the released emotions forthwith attach themselves to the first object at hand, namely the physician, who is thus, in fact, no more than a dummy on to which they are projected. The patient, however, does not realise this, and a new situation is created, called the "transference-neurosis." In strict Freudian practice, this neurosis-within-a-neurosis is itself analysed. The patient is brought to connect his feelings for the analyst with his childish experiences, and not to his relationship with the analyst. With the successful analysis of the transference, the treatment comes to an end.

Some degree of transference invariably occurs; and no treatment could progress very far without it. There may be periods when it takes a negative form, and the patient will tell his physician that time is being wasted, that he is

[1]"Most maladjusted individuals readily acquire such a transference or emotional dependence upon the psychologist if the latter is really rendering assistance in emotional problems." (R. B. Cattell: *A Guide to Mental Testing*, p. 293). Cattell is not a psychoanalyst.

getting worse instead of better, and that he wishes he had never entered upon such a preposterous procedure. But—unless the patient abandons the treatment during one of these "negative" phases—the doctor may rely upon a stock of positive transference being accumulated. The patient, beginning for the first time to see himself as he really is, and deprived of all support either from other people or from his own now waning self-esteem, and finding the physician detached, unshocked and undisturbed, may cling to him as a drowning man clings to a log. There is obvious danger in this situation. The patient may become so completely dependent upon his physician, so lost and desperate when away from him, that he repeatedly tries to overstay the time allotted to the interview, and begs, by letters, by telephone messages, by telegrams, for more and more hours to be given to him. If these appeals are refused, there is a risk that the patient will break off the treatment altogether, or even, in some cases, that he will commit suicide; if they are granted. he is confirmed in his attitude of dependence.

Like the symptoms of the neurosis itself, the transference represents the patient's flight from the task immediately confronting him. Not only does he himself say "No" to these tasks, but, by means of the transference (in either its positive or negative form), he unconsciously seeks to implicate the physician also in a situation which, though it makes progress impossible, may at the same time be represented as natural and inevitable, and for which, therefore, the patient must not be held responsible. "I could make progress," his attitude means, "if only you would be more friendly and sympathetic. I shall never get better while you are so cold and aloof; and it won't be my fault."

The Freudian method of dealing with the transference situation—which is that of prolonged analysis—is in a large number of cases neither practicable nor necessary. Ordinarily it is enough, if the transference should reach a stage of intensity which makes it embarrassing to both parties, that the physician should take the bull by the horns and interpret to the patient the significance of what has happened. He will explain how natural it is that, in view of the patient's relationship to him, and of the revival of early memories and experiences, he should have come to fill the double paternal role of protector and law-giver. The patient's present attitude of alternating affection for and rebellion against him is simply the revival of his former attitude to his parents. The helper will proceed, with the patient's co-operation, and by means of the material that has accumulated, to illustrate the truth of this thesis, showing precisely how the present situation, in this way and in that, is an echo or a repetition of the patient's childish attitudes of love and hate. He will do this as briefly and as convincingly as possible; and he will point out that the fundamental aim of the whole therapeutic process is to remove these inhibiting factors in the patient's psychological condition which have made the transference inevitable and, up to a point, valuable, and to enable him to stand on his own feet. The subsequent treatment will be directed to the "resolution" of the transference; a relationship which is essentially fictitious and vicarious must be replaced by a true one, in which each side meets the other on the plane of reality and mutual understanding.

A distinction must be drawn between the transference itself and Freud's interpretation of it in terms of infantile sexuality. It is possible to be highly critical of Freudian theory on the subject, and yet to recognise that, in the

words of an eminent Freudian, "the physician's love heals the patient." The late Dr. Ian Suttie, after quoting with approval this *dictum* of Ferenczi's, adds that

> "the healing is a reconciliation of the patient to his social and cultural environment. The physician's role is not the technical one of doctor, nor even the godlike one of perfect parent. It is much more that of sacrificial victim, upon whom all hates, anxieties and distrust are worked out, so that he is the mediator, the catalyte—whereby the separated psyche is reintegrated in its society."[1]

The essential thing is that the patient should *believe in* the man who is trying to help him. Unless he can do so, progress is impossible; that is why *psychotic* conditions, such as *dementia præcox* and *melancholia,* rarely respond to psychotherapeutic treatment. The helper must not only be imperturbable, unshockable and patient; he must let the sufferer see that he is interested in him as an individual and not merely as a "case." He must not deal with him *de haut en bas*. Whatever the patient may reveal, however startling or revolting, whatever insults or flatteries he may offer, the helper must not reprove, or condemn, or express astonishment—as if he had never before encountered depravity so gross, or behaviour so outrageous. The patient has to discover that the revelation of his fears, and his sense of isolation, and his non-co-operative, anti-social attitude, and his intolerable, morbid sense of guilt, does not result in the physician's withdrawal of interest and sympathy. As we have pointed out in a previous chapter, there must be no question, at this stage, of criticism or blame, or moral appraisal of the patient's disclosures.

[1] *The Origins of Love and Hate:* p. 248.

The non-expert clergyman is unlikely to have to deal—he will be wise not to attempt to deal—with a case involving an extreme transference, either positive or negative. Transference in a mild form, however, is probably an accompaniment, and even a condition, of any continuous and intimate pastoral relationship with an individual soul.[1] It is commonly said that a penitent's transference must itself be "transferred" from his spiritual guide to Christ. What is meant, perhaps, by "transferring the transference to Christ," is that *the patient and his Pastor* should be lifted into a sane, true, and healthy relationship to each other, by means of the relationship of each of them to our Lord; and that is a true statement of the case.

But who is sufficient for these things—which must be accomplished, both for himself and for the soul he is seeking to help, and for which he will one day have to give account, by the pastor? The considerations adduced in this Note are surely enough, in themselves, to dissuade from tampering with sick souls all ministers of the Gospel who are not prepared to discipline and develop their own lives. The truth is that the only perfectly "safe" psychotherapist would be the saint. We are not saints; but unless we are responding to the Divine "call to be saints," in addition to perfecting our psychological knowledge and technical equipment,[2] we shall be wise not to attempt such tasks as those described in these chapters.

It is worth adding that the argument of the previous paragraph finds strong support in quarters where the casual and amateur student of modern psychology would least expect, perhaps, to find it. Jung writes:

[1] "It is by no accident that the priest has so commonly been given the title of 'Father'." (Grensted: *Psychology and God*, p. 157.)

[2] This may well include undergoing analysis ourselves.

> "The step from educating others to self-education is demanded of the doctor in the stage of transformation. It is the corollary of the demand that the patient transform himself and thus complete the earlier stage of the treatment . . . I would . . . emphasise what has already been said: that the newest developments of analytical psychology confront us with the imponderable elements of human personality; that we have learned to place in the foreground the personality of the doctor himself as a curative or harmful factor; and that we have begun to demand his own transformation—the self-education of the educator. Everything that happened to the patient must now happen to the doctor, and he must pass through the stages of confession, explanation and education so that his personality will not react unfavourably on the patient. The physician may no longer slip out of his own difficulties by treating the difficulties of others. He will remember that a man who suffers from a running abscess is not fit to perform a surgical operation."[1]

The only perfectly "safe" psychotherapist, we said just now, would be the saint. It may be added, the only perfectly successful one; for he only will have a true conception of sin. Something has been said in the last chapter about the exaggerated sense of guilt which is characteristic of psychoneurotics, many of whom are wont to attribute it to secret indulgence in masturbation. The "guilt-complex" is much debated at the present day, and it would appear to be the contention of some writers that *all* forms of self-reproach should be regarded as neurotic and irrational, and as finally and satisfactorily removable by psycho-analysis. The Christian physician or pastor can entertain no such opinion. When all has been said that

[1] C. G. Jung: *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, pp. 59 ff.

can be said from the psychological point of view, it remains true that the only real "treatment" of sin—conscious and unconscious—is the Divine forgiveness;[1] and many a patient has come away from a merely "scientific" analyst uncured, because the latter failed to understand where his real and deepest need lay, and left him, in the end, to his own resources instead of pointing him to God. The "proclamation of forgiveness" is indeed, in Professor Grensted's words:

> "the first and greatest need of those who are involved in moral distress . . . Psychology, for all its outward appearance of charity, knows no forgiveness, and is therefore harder and less true to reality than the sternest Calvinism. For science is a matter of law and not of mercy, and the doctor who is not something more than a scientist has nothing to say to sin."
>
> (*Psychology and God*, p. 156.)

[1]Cp. John Macmurray: "The main task of creative religion is to prevent men from being ashamed of themselves." (*Creative Society*, p. 112.)

CHAPTER IV

OTHER PROBLEMS

Problems of Marriage

THERE is, in truth, only *one* problem of marriage and that—assuming the permanent nature of the relationship—is the problem of lifelong co-operation, both physical and spiritual, between one man and one woman. Within this great problem—for it is great and woe betide anybody who dares to minimise it!—we can, however, distinguish several lesser problems, and to these we shall turn our attention. We propose to deal with the following four topics:

i. Difficulties arising from inaccurate assumptions regarding the nature of marriage;
ii. Problems due to the psychological mechanism of projection;
iii. Sexual maladjustment;
iv. Difficulties connected with the inferiority complex.

i We begin by considering the important question of the assumptions in the minds of the contracting parties as they enter upon their married life. These assumptions are frequently *uncriticised*, and few influences are more powerful—and, we may add, more harmful—than uncriticised assumptions can be. It is entirely necessary for the happiness of a marriage that the assumptions of the bride and

of the bridegroom should be brought to view and submitted to an enlightened criticism. Otherwise great difficulties, which may finally wreck the marriage, will probably arise.

For example, a man may assume, and frequently does assume, that in marriage the wife should "mother" her husband and dance attendance upon him. Very likely this assumption has never become explicit in his mind. It is more and not less dangerous on that account. If his wife makes the same assumption, doubtless the marriage may proceed harmoniously and with tolerable success, although it certainly cannot develop into an ideal marriage. But it is more than likely that the wife will not view marriage in the same light. In this case there will be misunderstandings from first to last, and the marriage will be far from happy.

Again, the wife may assume (consciously or unconsciously) that marriage is a condition in which the husband is to dance attendance upon her; that it is to be a kind of prolonged engagement, in which all his spare time is at her disposal. This false assumption that matrimony is simply engagement continued on more intimate terms is, indeed, very common. It leads to great unhappiness, especially on the part of the wife, who wrongly supposes that her husband "does not love" her if he fails to play the part of the everlasting suitor.

Once more, the unconscious assumption in the mind of either or both of the partners to the marriage may be that it is going to be a personal achievement. When *both* the husband and the wife hold this view, there is likely to be constant strife. The marriage becomes a competition instead of a co-operative enterprise. Where only one of the partners adopts this point of view, he (or she) may

"get away with it," but the result can hardly be described as an ideal marriage. The man (it is more usually the man) is a kind of pale shadow of his wife, or, if he has any brilliance, it is obviously the reflected glory of the wife. A good many women enter upon marriage with the intention of "making their husbands," and sometimes this is no secret. As Dr. J. A. Hadfield has said, the attitude of some married women—and they take no pains to conceal it from their children—is best summed up in the words: "The men I might have married instead of your father!"

False assumptions such as these are a very fruitful cause of marital disharmony. The remedy is obvious. Those who marry should be clearly brought to see what are the right assumptions to make concerning marriage. They should be made to appreciate two great truths. First, marriage is a *joint* operation. There should be no thought of competition. It is a partnership on equal terms. This assumption is very hard for some people to make owing to the existence of the inferiority-complex. We shall discuss the reason for this more fully later. Secondly, marriage is a union which has two aspects, one physical and the other spiritual. In other words, it is a sacrament. In order to achieve a really happy and successful marriage, there must be a true union in both of these aspects. It is doubtless possible to "knock along" on the physical level alone, the two partners merely tolerating one another. But for a marriage in the best sense, there must be "a marriage of true minds" and not only of bodies. That is why it is a fatal mistake to assume, as some do, that happiness can be secured by a free indulgence in sexual relationships both within and without the marriage bond. This is to reduce human sexuality to the level of that of

the animals. It is to make sex trivial, "like cleaning your teeth," as one ultra-modern young woman put it. This it can never be. Man is a mental and spiritual being, and in consequence *all* his acts of necessity have something of the sacramental in them. Those who seek satisfaction at the physical level alone miss entirely "the many splendoured thing."

Men and women who enter upon marriage with these considerations clearly in their minds will find that it is capable of satisfying human nature, as few other things can. They will have difficulties, of course, and we shall shortly consider the reasons for some of these: but the true apprehension of the nature of their undertaking will save them from many misunderstandings. It will also give them the requisite determination to persevere through whatever difficulties may arise in order to make that very considerable achievement, a successful marriage. They will realise the truth of the saying that "love" is the conclusion rather than the beginning of marriage. Physical attraction there must be at the beginning and all along. This, however, should be regarded as the raw material of married love, and by no means mistaken for the finished article itself.

We now turn to those complications which arise in marriage as a result of the troublesome psychological mechanism of projection, whereby a person, like a magic lantern "projects" (unconsciously) his ideas and emotions upon another person. The closeness of the marriage relation makes this particularly liable to happen, as, indeed, in some degree it invariably does at first. That is why it usually takes a married couple some time to "settle down" to their new life.

When two persons become engaged, it may be said with

truth that there are really six people involved. There are, first of all, the man and the girl, as they really are. Secondly, there are the man and the girl as each fancies himself (or herself) to be. Finally, there are the persons as they appear to each other. It is this last couple which particularly concerns us now, for it is here that the mechanism of projection comes into play. That is why it is commonly said that love is blind. This proverb derives its unquestionable truth from the fact that two lovers at first (inevitably) "project"—to some extent, at least—upon one another unconscious wishes and thoughts. In other words, they see one another, not as they really are, but as they (mainly unconsciously) wish one another to be. A modern writer has truly remarked that "many problems in life are due to the fact that we think people are what we want them to be."[1] Again, he writes: "We should all like to believe that the girl of our dreams is the most beautiful girl in the world, but to see someone who corresponds to our phantasy in the front row of the chorus and to marry her is to court disaster."[2] The exact nature of this projection varies, as might be expected, in every case. In general, however, it may be said that the man imagines the girl to be his feminine counterpart. By this we mean that he sees in the girl what he wants to find, namely, a soul mate who perfectly understands him, even where he does not understand himself, and who is perfectly attuned to all his needs. There is, of course, some truth in this picture, since woman is by nature capable of intuitively discerning the needs of the man better than he can himself. This, to a large extent, is the part which she plays in life. But she can rarely do this

[1]Graham Howe: *Motives and Mechanisms of the Mind*, p. 157.
[2]*Ibid*, p. 33.

perfectly at first, and in any case her function is a far wider one than merely to be a kind of unconscious mirror of the man's moods. Consequently, if the man supposes that all his wishes are realised in this respect, and, still more, if he thinks that they ought to be realised, there is likely to be misunderstanding and disillusionment.

In the case of the woman, the projection does not work in quite the same way. The man has not the woman's intuitive capacity. His function in relation to her is to be the ideal hero in some respect, whether in physical valour or appearance, or intellect, or character. Every girl, therefore, tends at first to think of her *fiancé* in that light. Even the most commonplace individual is invested with a glamour from this source. The fact of this projection is plainly shown by the well known fact that any man who performs an action which can be described as "heroic," *e.g.*, flying the Atlantic, will certainly receive many proposals of marriage from girls whom he has never seen. All these young women have fallen in love with their own projections found, as they think, in real life. Since the majority of men are not heroes, and, even if they were, they would have their unheroic side when you lived with them, this projection picture requires very considerable modification before a real understanding can be reached. Nevertheless, a really happy marriage cannot result until the six different pictures of which we have spoken have been reduced to two, *viz.*, the man and the woman as they really are. When each thinks himself (or herself) and his partner to be more or less what they really are, and accepts the situation, there is genuine hope of happiness. Until that takes place, there can be nothing but disillusionment and misunderstanding.

The distorting influence of projection is especially

liable to take place in very young marriages. Husband and wife in these circumstances suffer from an almost total lack of experience which makes it very hard for them to resolve the projection and get to know one another as they really are. Moreover, if babies soon begin to arrive, they will probably have less and less opportunity of finding the necessary time together to make this possible. Many years may, therefore, go by when their children are growing up, during which the parents are largely strangers to one another. One day in later middle life, when their children have all left home, they will wake up suddenly to the fact that they are quite incompatible. The fact is merely that they have never worked through their childish projections to a true mutual understanding. It is not surprising if thoughts of divorce begin to suggest themselves, and, in fact, not a few divorces do occur at this period of life.

It is in such circumstances as these that the determination to form a lifelong marriage plays such an important part. When the process of disillusionment begins, a strain is apt to arise between the two which may easily reach breaking point if they are not held together by a strong tie, like belief in the indissolubility of marriage. Given this tie to hold them together, they will probably before long come to a true mutual understanding and succeed in forming a true fellowship in marriage. Apart from this, they may easily drift into divorce, without having learnt the lesson of Marriage. Consequently, if and when they marry again the process of disillusionment will probably repeat itself, and so *ad infinitum*. What is needed is not a greater facility for divorce, but some means of ensuring that those who get married will have some understanding, at least of the all important mechanism of projection. The

clergy might surely be expected to do something in this direction. It must be plainly taught that divorce means failure, and that greater frequency of divorce means ever more and more failure. For, just as nothing succeeds like success, so nothing fails like failure.

We now pass to a very important and complex cause of marriage difficulties, namely, those due to sexual maladjustment. Marriage is far more than a physical union, and, as we have seen, it can never be successful unless the physical is regarded as the raw material of the spiritual fellowship which has to be created by the man and wife. At the same time—apart from exceptional cases—the physical attraction and passion which are associated with being "in love" are an indispensable condition of a happy marriage. Unless this physical love is mutually given and taken, the marriage cannot be expected to run smoothly. It is, therefore, necessary to pay some attention to the chief causes of sexual maladjustment in married life.

First of all, we must mention entirely physical causes—*i.e.*, physical causes which have no psychological counterpart, or, at any rate, no psychological basis. Physiological impotence is an obvious example of this. Causes of such a kind plainly cannot as a rule be altered, although sometimes this is possible by surgical means. All that can or need be said here about such causes as these is that they are not necessarily an insuperable obstacle to married happiness *provided that their existence is known to both parties prior to the wedding*. They can then enter into the contract with their eyes open. On the other hand, when the discovery is not made until after the marriage—especially if this applies to one partner of the marriage only—it may lead to grave disharmony and bitter resentment. The obvious way of avoiding these difficulties is for the engaged

couple to be physically examined by a competent medical man before they are married. There are some who think that such an examination should be enforced by the State. Certainly, until this is the case, the folly and conservatism of human nature being what they are, it is not likely to take place in the majority of marriages. Here, again, perhaps the clergy can do something towards influencing public opinion in the right direction.

Sexual maladjustment, however, may equally arise from psychological causes, and it frequently does. Since these causes are both avoidable and (in theory at least) removable, it is important that they should be understood. The commonest two forms of maladjustment are frigidity in women and impotence in men. To take frigidity first, this is most frequently due to the fact (the existence of which it is vitally important for every bridegroom to recognise) that a woman's sexual desires as a rule awaken more slowly than a man's. On the wedding night the man may be filled with desire whereas the bride is not. If on this occasion the bridegroom is selfish and inconsiderate, as he sometimes is, the result may and probably will be to drive underground the woman's sexual passion and to make her frigid. A little sympathetic handling of this situation would prevent a good deal of marital unhappiness. Some women find the act of intercourse repugnant for the rest of their lives owing to this unfortunate beginning.

A woman's frigidity, however, may be due to repressed sexual desire. One of a variety of causes may have led to this. She may, for example, as a child have been the victim of sexual assault; or, she may have formed an Electra complex, *i.e.*, all her sexual desire may unconsciously be "fixated" upon her father, insomuch that she

cannot make any other heterosexual attachment properly. For the complete removal of such morbid conditions as these, expert psychotherapeutic treatment is necessary.

Impotence in men, when psychologically induced, is due to the same cause, *viz.*, the repression of sexual desire, though in the case of the man it will come about in rather a different way. He may be suffering from an unconscious mother fixation, due to the Œdipus Complex. This is, perhaps, the commonest cause of impotence in men. Another way in which it comes about is through a sundering of the physical and the mental aspects of sex. This sometimes happens when a man has had recourse to prostitutes. In his relations with them he has found a sexual outlet on the physical plane only. The mental aspect of his sex life, however, has found no true expression here. When he "falls in love" the latter finds a worthy object. But he discovers to his dismay that when he wishes to find an object for his physical passion here also he cannot succeed, because the result of his previous behaviour has been to divorce the two. In these and other similar cases analysis is necessary.

Another cause of sexual maladjustment resides in the difference between the reproductive instinct as it exists in a man and a woman respectively. In a woman (since it is largely maternal) it is only partly directed towards her mate. In a man, on the other hand, only a relatively small part of the mating instinct is paternal. There is a sense in which a child must always mean more to the mother than to the father. She has carried it for months, and after birth it has been most intimately associated with her. During the period immediately before and immediately after birth the baby fills a large place in the woman's thoughts and emotions. She will, therefore, have corres-

pondingly less time for and interest in her husband during those periods. This is apt to make things difficult for him. He may easily feel himself to be rather "at a loose end" then, and in consequence be tempted to seek for satisfaction in other quarters; and the woman, if she does not rightly appreciate the situation, may try to hold her husband to her in the wrong way, *e.g.*, by manifesting jealousy and endeavouring to prevent him from going anywhere alone. On the other hand, if her sexual relationship with her husband has not been entirely satisfactory to her, she may "go maternal" with the (unconscious) intention of escaping from his sexual demands. In either case, there will arise an unhappy situation, which might have been avoided if there had been a true understanding of the nature of female sexuality. The policy of keeping woman "innocent" in sexual matters is both foolish and cruel. A little commonsense reflexion will make it clear that there can be nothing wrong in their understanding the nature which God has given them. It is, indeed, difficult to understand how such an absurd idea could have gained currency. Psychology has provided us with the clue. It is, in fact, a case of projection once more. Men have projected upon women their sense of guilt in connexion with sex. Hence it is thought to be wrong that women should have any sex life, and they have been etherealised into "pure and innocent" creatures who must not be defiled by the uncleanness of sex. That is why sexual promiscuity in a man is frequently condoned by those who hold that in a woman it is a grave offence.

Before we leave this part of our subject, we must deal briefly with the problem of sexual restraint and the use of mechanical and chemical contraceptives. Plainly, more than a brief treatment of a very large question is impos-

sible here. It is, however, both possible and desirable to mention certain aspects of it.

In the first place, it must be emphasised that up to the present time no perfectly secure method of contraception has been devised. Even with the use of the greatest care and skill, there is always the possibility (albeit small) that conception may occur.[1] Hence contraceptives cannot eliminate what Dr. Esther Harding, who is not herself an opponent of them, has called the "haunting fear of pregnancy." This means that they may break down in the most urgent case of all, *i.e.*, when another pregnancy would endanger the life of the mother. Abstinence is the wisest course to adopt here, since it is, in any case, far less harmful than the death of the mother would be. Moreover, in order to insure the maximum degree of efficiency, precautions of such a character are required as to be greatly irritating to many persons. One advocate of these methods of birth control frankly confesses that well over fifty per cent of some 250 people investigated had given up the methods because they were "either so ineffective or so distressing or so troublesome that they abandoned the attempt to use them."[2] It should not be forgotten that many advocates of contraception are inclined to skate rather light heartedly over these difficulties. Even should a completely safe contraceptive be found, it is not likely that these objections will be eliminated.

Secondly, there is what may be called the æsthetic

[1] *Cf.*, *e.g.*, the following passage from a book by an enthusiastic advocate of birth control: "In *theory*, there are many methods which *should* prove highly successful. They are not infallible—no method is. But granted they are carried out in accordance with the directions given, they should present a very high degree of efficacy. In actual practice, however, the number of failures is often a considerable one." G. A. Scott: *Facts and Fallacies of Practical Birth Control*, (1935) p. 22.

[2] L. S. Florence: *Birth Control on Trial*, p. 56.

aspect of the use of artificial conception control. This is closely bound up with the practical difficulties which have just been mentioned, but it is distinguishable from it and is deserving of separate consideration. It is a consideration which weighs differently with different persons. To some it raises an almost insuperable objection. Others are hardly influenced by it at all. Where this objection exists, it would seem to counterbalance any advantages which result from the opportunities of intercourse which con-contraceptives provide.

Thirdly, artificial conception control fails entirely to provide a solution of the problem of sexual restraint, unless *both* the partners of the marriage are in agreement concerning its use. Any hesitation, fear or scruple in the mind (conscious or unconscious) of one partner will be likely greatly to diminish and even to cancel the value of the practice.

Thus far we have confined ourselves to practical considerations which hold good even granting the moral legitimacy of the practice of contraception as such. We must now turn to the theoretical, ethical question. Is the use of artificial devices for birth control ever morally right? Once more, a full discussion is impossible. We must content ourselves with affirming the following propositions. First, there is, in our opinion, no fundamental ethical distinction to be drawn between seeking to avoid conception, after intercourse, by one means *as such*[1] rather than another, except in so far as æsthetic considerations intervene. Secondly, there is clear evidence that intercourse has a moral and spiritual value apart from the intention to procreate children, in that it fosters sacra-

[1] *i.e.*, apart, *e.g.*, from the social effects of factories where birth-control appliances are made.

mentally the mutual love of husband and wife. Thirdly, self-control has great moral value. Any use of contraceptive methods which undermines this is to be condemned.

We conclude, therefore, that, although it cannot be rightly maintained that the use of artificial contraceptive methods is *per se* wrong,[1] the number of cases where they will be conducive to the highest well-being of the home is probably comparatively small. Each individual couple, however, must consider their own case prayerfully on its merits, remembering that the only completely safe form of birth control is abstinence, which should, if possible, be employed when the birth of another child would endanger the life of the mother or be economically disastrous. It must be emphasised that abstinence practised in a spirit of prayer and reliance upon God is completely different from abstinence carried out merely as an act of self-control. If it is offered to God, it acquires a sacramental character in the same way as intercourse does. If a couple should find themselves unable to come to a clear and conscientious decision after such consideration, they should consult a wise priest or a Christian doctor, but preferably the former.

Experience seems to show that unfortunately the laity do not as a general rule consult their parish priest in these matters. This is probably because they do not expect to find in him a well informed and sympathetic guide in these problems. They fear that their difficulties will be treated out of hand from the rigorist point of view. It is surely most desirable that the clergy should not be regarded in such a light. The result of the adoption of a

[1]This is the most vital aspect of the decisions of the 1930 Lambeth Conference.

rigorist attitude by them in these matters is not to restrain the laity from the use of contraceptives but merely to cause them not to consult their clergy about them. There is even evidence that in the Roman Church some priests refrain from asking certain questions in the confessional lest they should bring to light the existence of what is, according to Roman moral theology, *per se* a sin.[1]

The upshot of the foregoing discussion of the causes of sexual maladjustment in marriage is that, when it arises, recourse should be made to an experienced adviser. Above all, if difficulties arise, it should never be assumed that the wife is "temperamentally frigid." Doubtless women, and men too, vary considerably in the depth of their desires; but complete "frigidity" in a woman is a pathological phenomenon which has no right to exist.

We come now to an immensely fruitful cause of difficulty in marriage, and that is the influence of the inferiority complex. Here is the key[2] to the understanding of a woman's psychology. It must be remembered that it is only in comparatively recent times, and as a result of centuries of Christian teaching and influence, that woman has come to be regarded as the equal of man. For immemorial centuries she has been in an inferior position, with no rights of her own, being hardly more than the

[1]See B. Lavaud, O.P.: *Le Monde moderne et le Mariage chrétien*, p. 89. "Reconnaissons-le sans ambages: des prêtes, en trop grand nombre, trop longtemps ont gardé le silence, en chaire et au confessional, sur les péchés de la vie conjugale, ont omis d'interroger ou d'instruire quand il fallait le faire." Again: Some priests "partant du principe qu'une erreur invincible excuse de faute grave, pour ne pas augmenter la faute, ni risquer d'éloigner des sacrements, estimaient licite et préférable de laisser les pénitents dans l'erreur et même de la favoriser adroitement, en s'abstenant d'interroger ceux qui ne disaient rien ou en remettant à leur propre conscience ceux qui, tout en consultant le confesseur, déclaraient ne pas voir de faute grave dans leur façon d'agir." *Ibid.* p. 92.

[2]Or at least, the nearest approach to a key.

slave or chattel of man. It is only necessary to read the Old Testament with open eyes to realise this. The second Commandment, for example, which places a man's wife along with, and after, his house as one of his possessions makes this point of view perfectly clear. Consequently, it is to be expected that women will *tend* to bear in her psyche the marks of these many centuries of oppression. Experience confirms this expectation. Psychological analysis of women makes it quite clear that there exists in the mind of every woman a strong tendency to an *unconscious* sense of inferiority. The fact that the majority of women deny this, even with warmth, does not affect the truth of this judgment, seeing that the sense of inferiority has been repressed. Indeed, the fierceness of the repudiation is itself a confirmatory sign, as we said in a previous chapter.

This unconscious tendency to inferiority in the female sex as such is the cause of the well known fact that women must not only be loved by their husbands, but frequently be told this. Appreciation is the very food of their spirits. If a woman feels that she is appreciated she will perform heroic feats of sacrificing love, but she needs to be reassured of this constantly: unreasonably, many men will say. But it seems unreasonable only because it is forgotten that she has to be over-compensated for the unconscious sense of inferiority which has been fastened upon her by man for many centuries. Even to-day influences tending in the same direction are not by any means absent. After all, even our modern civilisation is man made. Women as a class are still in an inferior position. In the eyes of the law a woman's rights are not equal to those of her husband, whose name she must needs take at marriage. There are many parents who are openly disappointed

when their first child is not a boy. Consequently, there are many unfortunate women walking about the world permanently maladjusted because their parents wished that they had been boys.

It is vitally important that every bridegroom should firmly grasp this fundamental piece of psychology. Innumerable marriages have been marred for no other reason than that the man soon ceased to bestow upon his wife those little attentions which mean so much to a woman. If a husband takes his wife for granted, he can also take it for granted that his marriage will not be without constant, even if only petty, friction. To be taken for granted is more than any normal woman can tolerate. Here is the psychological root of those most unpleasant of feminine qualities, nagging, spitefulness, and "cattiness." A "catty" woman is one who is over-compensating an unconscious sense of inferiority, in some form. Doubtless there are abnormally masculine women who are independent of such appreciation, but such women tend to seek a "career" rather than marriage, or, if they marry, they "wear the breeches," in which case it does not matter much what the man does, since he has ceased to count, at least in his own home.

Problems of Temperament.

Contemporary psychology is paying much attention to the study of the factors which make it possible for us to *classify* human beings, while recognising that each individual is in the last analysis unique, himself and not another. It takes all sorts to make a world; but how many sorts are there? That is the question. And its practical

importance is clear. If, for example, only men of the X type are capable of succeeding in or enjoying a particular occupation, or mastering a particular skill, and it can be shown scientifically and objectively that A is lacking—in spite, it may be, of superficial appearances to the contrary—in the characteristics of the X type, then it is obvious that to put A into that occupation is only asking for trouble for all concerned.

McDougall distinguishes between disposition ("the sum-total of an individual's instinctive tendencies")[1] and temperament ("the sum of the effects upon his mental life of the metabolic or chemical changes that are constantly going on in all the tissues of his body": cp. Cattell, "the sum-total of reactions determined by physiological conditions"); but for practical purposes they may be considered together.

It is well known that certain endocrinologists believe that a man's temperament is wholly determined by his endocrine glands[2]; one American authority, indeed, is prepared to divide humanity into pituitary, thyroid, thymus personalities and so on. But most authorities would agree with Drs. Henderson and Gillespie that

> "attempts to define an 'adrenal type,' a 'thyroid type' and so on have little or no basis in fact,"[3]

though this is not to deny, of course, that endocrine

[1] *Outline of Psychology*, p. 351. "When some one of the instinctive tendencies is proportionately strong, that one characterises the individual's 'disposition'; he may thus be pugnacious (anger), gluttonous (food-seeking instinct), fastidious (repulsion), etc., etc. Disposition may of course be influenced by early environment.

[2] The internal secretions ("hormones") of which are conveyed to various parts of the body by being absorbed into the blood-stream. The principal glands of internal secretion are the adrenal, the thyroid, the pituitary and the thymus; the last-named (like the liver and the gonads, or sex glands) is a gland of external as well as internal secretion.

[3] *Textbook of Insanity*, p. 64.

factors are involved in many forms of mental disturbance and disease.

Putting the endocrine gland typology on one side, there is a marked similarity between the systems of temperament classification generally in use.

1. Jung's scheme is well known. There are four principal human *functions*: thinking, feeling, sensation (*i.e.*, feeling at the level of mere "sensing") and intuition; and one or other of these is, broadly speaking, characteristic of every human being. Jung affirms, further, that each individual adopts one of two *attitudes to the external world*, introverted or extraverted. In Jung's own words,

> "this then is the basic characteristic of the extraverted attitude: the psychic life is displayed, so to speak, outside the individual, in objects and relationships to objects. In especially marked cases there occurs a sort of blindness for one's own individuality. In contrast with this, the introvert always conducts himself towards the object as if the latter possessed a superior power over him against which he had to steady himself."
>
> (*Problems of Personality*, p. 296.)

A man or woman, then, may be characterised by any one of the four functions, and may be either introverted or extraverted. Hitler is a good example of the feeling-extravert—or, perhaps, like most successful demagogues, the intuitive-extravert. "John Bull" is a sensation-extravert. Kant was a thinking-introvert; Blake, perhaps, an intuitive-introvert: and so on. This scheme of classification is extremely complex and ambitious.

2. There is a close similarity between the introvert-extravert classification and Kretschmer's division of humanity into cycloids and schizoids. The former are

sociable, sympathetic, liable to alternations of mood, "easily provoked," co-operative, frank; in contra-distinction from persons of this temperament, the schizoids are secretive, apathetic, fearful, unsociable and distrustful.

3. R. B. Cattell, one of the foremost authorities in this field, has recently (*A Guide to Mental Testing*, 1936) claimed to have established, by means of laboratory tests, the existence of a temperament factor more fundamental and specific than anything recognised by Jung or Kretschmer. Cattell calls it *surgency*. The "surgent" temperament is marked by talkativeness, self-confidence, instability, elation, activity and excitability; the *de*surgent, by stodginess, a conventional bearing, shyness, deadly earnestness, exclusiveness and conservatism (he "likes the same old walks, tunes, books, neighbourhood").

The principal concern of psychological workers in this field is to discover a means by which a person's temperament may be scientifically and objectively measured. This work is still in its infancy—though it is asserted that "2,000 books and articles" on the testing of temperament and character "have been published in the past decade" (P. E. Vernon in *The Testing of Intelligence*, p. 114)—and progress is very slow. Human personality is a complex, delicate and elusive instrument, and there is general recognition that the investigation of it can never be completely and satisfactorily carried out by purely "scientific" instruments. Nevertheless, the experimental means (which are of extreme intricacy and elaborateness) of testing certain temperament factors are undergoing very rapid improvement, and the results tend to correspond closely with subjective estimates conscientiously made. It is of some importance that the clergy should be

aware that there are certain factors in personality which, it is not unreasonably claimed, may be objectively measured in the psychological laboratory.

There is ground for holding that inborn capacity consists of "one massive general ability"—referred to by this type of psychology as "*g*"—"and a host of special aptitudes" ("*s*'s")[1] (Cattell: *A Guide to Mental Testing*, p. 1). It is the detection and measurement of "*s*'s" which is of particular interest. Among them may be mentioned (1) "perseveration" ("*p*"), the individual's capacity to switch his attention rapidly from one activity to another; a person who does so with difficulty is spoken of as a "high perseverator," and it is claimed by some investigators that a degree of perseveration either markedly above or markedly below the average indicates proneness to mental breakdown: (2) "fluency of association" ("*f*"), revealing itself in "quickness of thinking, width and range in association and imagination" (Cattell); (3) "surgency," which has been described above and is referred to as "*c*." It has been found that a high degree of "*c*" goes along with high "*f*" capacity;[2] this leads Cattell to affirm that "*f*" tests are therefore "of higher validity than any other yet discovered in the realm of temperament testing." One of the best-known is the "Rorschach ink-blot test." The subject is shown a number of irregular, meaningless, black or coloured shapes, and told to write down (or to tell the observer) all the things he can "see" in it, as one "sees" things in clouds or in the fire.

A test which has proved its value in indicating significant unconscious complexes and conflicts, repressions, emotional blind spots, etc., is Jung's famous word

[1] See C. Spearman: *The Abilities of Man*.

[2] This "correlation" of tests is obviously of great importance; the aim of all workers in this field is to state it mathematically.

association experiment. The observer has before him a list of 100 common words. He reads these out one by one, and the subject replies with the first word that comes into his head; his reactions are timed by means of a stop-watch, and recorded. Then the list of stimulus-words is read again, and the subject (who has not been told that this is going to happen) is asked to repeat, in each case, the response he gave on the former occasion. His responses, or failures to respond, and differences in response, are recorded as before. The most significant indications that the stimulus word has touched a complex are prolonged delay in response, and failure to reproduce the response. (This is not specifically a test of temperament, but discovery of complexes by this means may well supplement or correct the results of purely temperamental tests.)

The similarity between Jung's introvert-extravert and Kretschmer's schizoid-cycloid scales has been mentioned. McDougall has suggested that the real difference between the introvert and the schizoid is that the latter is egocentric in a special sense and degree. "The simple introvert may maintain good *rapport* with his fellows"[1]; not so the true schizoid, which is why he is more prone than the introvert to the form of psychosis known as *dementia præcox*.[2] McDougall presented this view (in 1926) as a "suggestion"; it was not, apparently, based on laboratory experiments; it is therefore interesting to find Professor Cattell[3] saying that the results of his own experimental tests (first reported in 1933) "are in agreement with" McDougall's "important but subtle distinction." It would appear that the schizothyme tempera-

[1] *Outline of Abnormal Psychology*, p. 392.
[2] The most manifest symptom of which is an extreme incapacity for interest in the external world of persons and things.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 393.

ment—that is, the schizoid in its extreme, pathological development, as seen in *dementia præcox*—"is the desurgent temperament plus a secondary factor "*a*," (a factor involving secretiveness, 'extremeness,' stinginess, subjectivity of thought, pessimism, unemotionality, tactlessness)"[1] Cattell's classification of temperament along the lines here indicated, supported, as it claims to be at every point, by the most painstaking and intricate laboratory methods, is likely to be increasingly adopted by workers in the field of "applied" psychology.

The interest of such investigations as these to the pastor and the priest is evident. There are many kinds of sanctity, the Holy Spirit dividing to each one severally as He will; and many of our pastoral failures are due to our trying to force all souls into the same mould. It is, of course, in the field of vocational guidance that the clergyman with some scientific knowledge of temperamental factors may be expected to find it most useful. We do not mean that every clergyman should have a stop-watch; or that Father A, consulted by a member of his Girls' Guild who wishes to test her vocation to the religious life, should borrow a tachistoscope in order to test her "*c*": or that all bishops and examining chaplains must be competent to test the "*f*" of every aspirant to the ministry! The kind of testing referred to above is work for experts. But the knowledge that it is possible might well, under certain circumstances, prompt a clergyman to advise a particular individual to consult such an expert.[2] It is obvious, for example, that if a young man were authoritatively pronounced to belong, not merely to the introverted but to

[1]Cattell, *op. cit.*, p. 165-166.

[2]In this connexion we may point out the value of the parish priest being in friendly contact with the local child guidance clinic, where such exists.

the schizoid temperament, it would be risky, and even wrong, to train him for the ministry at the expense of an Ordination Candidates' Fund, since there would be grave probability of his succumbing to mental disorder.

In his day-to-day pastoral work the clergyman will find plenty of opportunity of giving counsel and advice on the basis of his knowledge of temperamental differences. One of the "secrets of successful living," in the Christian sense of that phrase, is the recognition of *facts*. Too many people are living as if things were other than they are—and as if *they* were other than they are. A simple illustration may be given. It is well known that most people, given some indication as to the difference between introversion and extraversion, will immediately pronounce themselves to be introverts. It is the universal intuition to this effect (seldom articulate or formulated) which makes the enlisting of lay folk in Christian "witness" such uphill work. But in many cases the conviction amounts to no more than an unconscious defence against being involved in outside activities and responsibilities. These people are inclined, in other words, to rationalise their sloth as temperamental and unalterable incapacity. The true extravert, on the other hand, who is most happy when "going about doing good"—especially, as Bishop Creighton once remarked, the kind of good that involves still further going about—is under a continual temptation to dissipate his energies in surface activities, and to forget that a life cannot be fully Christian which leaves no room for the cultivation of reflection and worship.

The fundamental bases of temperament are innate: introverts, surgents, perseverators and the rest are born, not made. You cannot make extraverts out of introverts. But temperament "is always overlaid by the effects of

training and environment,"[1] and the most effective lives are those in which opportunities are provided for the attitudes both of introversion and extraversion to find due expression. All schools of modern psychology are agreed in emphasising the supreme importance of early years in this connexion. The clergyman, bearing this in mind, may sometimes be able to offer a warning to parents who have no such knowledge. Prevention is better than cure. Apprehension might reasonably be felt, for example,

> "concerning a child who was abnormally shy and seclusive, shunning companionship in work or play, absorbed in his own society and his own fantasies, his only response to others being to accept complacently any suggestion made to him (though without taking any personal interest in anything he was led to do as the result of such suggestions). No less suspicious would be a boy in the later stages of adolescence whose general attitude to his surroundings betrayed a profound introversion: who became markedly apathetic and indifferent, to the point of being regardless of the impression he made (however surprising, disagreeable, or provoking) on other people; with whom it became more and more difficult to maintain really sympathetic relations; who was apparently incapable of regret, or pity, or enthusiasm; whose personal habits grew slovenly, or worse; who plainly regarded the world and its inhabitants as existing for his comfort and convenience, and interpreted trivial events and casual remarks, even by strangers, as directed either to his own harm or well-being. In either of these cases the observer would be justified in warning the individual's family of the probable outcome of such traits of temperament if allowed to continue unchecked."[2]

[1] P. E. Vernon in *The Testing of Intelligence* (Edited by Hamley,) p. 115.
[2] *Manual of Pastoral Psychology*, pp. 117-118.

How can temperamental difficulties be modified or overcome? The fact that "temperament is overlaid by the effects of training and environment," and the responsibility lying upon parents and educators to provide channels for the satisfaction both of extraverted and introverted tendencies in the growing child, suggest the answer to this question. The longer such efforts at modification are postponed, the more difficult they will be. But, as a simple illustration of what can be done, suppose the pastor to be dealing with the case of an introverted man of twenty-five. He will acquaint himself with the environmental conditions of the man's life—his home, his occupation, his friends; this knowledge may well suggest ways for the modification and re-direction of temperamental factors. Particular attention should be paid to the patient's leisure-time. How much of it is there?—and how does he spend it? He should be encouraged to concentrate on using it—that part of his life most completely under his own control—for the making and development of attachments to the world of people and things outside himself. Thus, a good deal was accomplished in the case of a young fellow with a passion for photography and all its processes, by getting him to join a photographic club. Many introverts, who have made some progress in the life of prayer, can help themselves by supplementing their intercessions by getting into some concrete and actual contact with those they pray for: entering into correspondence with someone in the mission field, for example, or undertaking to read to a sick person.

It is to be noted that temperamental endowment is a matter of *balance*—of less or more, not of plus or minus. It is this fact which makes modification possible. The point may perhaps be made clear by contrasting, from this

point of view, temperament and innate "intelligence" ("*g*"). Any given individual has so much "*g*" and no more, and nothing that education or training can do will give him any more, though it can make the best or the worst of the material to hand: we cannot make silk purses out of sows' ears, or geniuses out of morons. But to say that an individual is "an introvert" does not mean that his temperamental endowment is, so to speak, all introversion and nothing else: it means, rather, that the biochemical constituents of his body are combined in such a way that those making for extraversion will not get themselves expressed unless they are afforded special opportunities.

Christian holiness is a many-sided thing, and every temperament has its own contribution to make to the Body's manifestation of the riches of Christ's character. Let no-one doubt the possibility, or the need, of desurgent as well as of surgent saints!

Problems of Social Life.

In this section we deal with the impact upon the individual of certain features characteristic of the modern world, of the kind which have been briefly indicated in Part I, pp. 61*ff*. But it must be emphasised at the outset that there are, strictly speaking, no purely individual problems of conduct or character. Man is a social animal, and cannot, if he would, live unto himself. Conversely, the life of a community consists of the relations between the individuals composing it. Sacramental philosophy recognises this double truth. Individuals are received into the Church, and receive the spiritual food

of Christ's Body and Blood one by one; but the symbolism both of Baptism and of the Eucharist bears eloquent witness to the truth that individuality can only grow in fellowship. The distinction sometimes drawn between the "conversion of souls" and the "redemption of society" is a mischievous one. No soul will be in the fullest sense "saved" until "all things are put under His feet"; and the redemption of "humanity" is meaningless apart from the redemption of men and women.

There is a further—or, perhaps, a prior implication in sacramentalism, and, indeed, in the doctrine of the Incarnation. It is man in his totality of being—body and spirit —who is the object of God's redemptive activity: man in every aspect of his nature, and in all his social relationships. It is difficult to see how this assertion, stated thus in general terms, can be denied.[1] Yet it is well known that many Christians would dispute it, urging, in particular, that a man's religion should not be allowed to affect his politics, and that religion and economics have nothing to do with one another. They would agree with Calvin that in no circumstances whatever is rebellion against the civil authority justifiable—"the use of the sword ought not to be permitted any private individual, to make re-

[1]It is sometimes questioned, on the ground of our Lord's disregard of specific political and economic issues. Discussion of this topic would be out of place here; but two relevant considerations may be referred to. (1) The centre of our Lord's message was the Kingdom of God. His disciples were taught to pray, Thy Kingdom come on earth: that is, that God's writ may run in every department and in all the relationships of human life. (2) The ultimate ground of the Church's concern with problems of the social order is the Person rather than the precepts of Christ. The function of the Church is not, primarily, to disseminate the ethical principles of the Sermon on the Mount, but, as the living Body of the living Lord, to be the organ of His Kingdom: to continue the redemptive activity which by His death and resurrection he initiated. See for further discussion: *Preface to a Christian Sociology*, by C. E. Hudson; *God, Man and Society*, by V. A. Demant; *Faith and Society*, by M. B. Reckitt; *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, by Reinhold Niebuhr; *Christ and Society*, by the late Bishop Gore.

sistance to evil. To condemn the public use of the sword, which God hath ordained for our protection, is blasphemy against God Himself. The sword is placed in the ruler's hands to punish malefactors; since God orders him to do this, who are we to hinder him?"—and with those at the present day who profoundly disapprove the Church's growing concern with "sociology."

We have already suggested, in an earlier chapter, some of the grounds for dissent from this view. We confess ourselves unable to understand how it can be seriously maintained that there are any human relationships—political, economic, industrial or financial—outside the redemptive purpose of God, and therefore not properly the concern of the Church, the Body of Christ. "Religion either includes and dominates economics, or it is empty of all substance, without real significance."[1]

The contrary view must be condemned, as being what Professor Macmurray calls "pseudo-religion." Yet it must be confessed that what the Communist contemptuously derides as "idealism" is only too prevalent in some religious circles, which frankly think of "spirituality" as incompatible with concern with the material world, or, at any rate, as possible without it: religion is, so to say, a refuge which these people seek when they go to church or say their prayers, and which they leave when they rise from their knees in order to return to the "real" world of men and women and conflict and peril. Such a conception of religion is correctly described as "dope." But something very like it is to be found in religious quarters usually accounted perfectly orthodox and respectable. In the summer of 1936 the Social and Industrial Commission of the Church Assembly presented a Report on the Coal

[1]Macmurray: *Creative Society*, p. 154.

Industry: a Report bearing, as the Archbishop of Canterbury, not without irony, observed, "all those marks of substance and moderation without which no report would be likely to commend itself to the Assembly." In the course of the Assembly debate, one speaker affirmed that the Report "was entirely out of place . . . members were not in the Assembly to discuss the coal industry . . . the whole question of that trade was entirely out of place in that Assembly." Another speaker was terrified "lest the impression should get about that the Church thought that power, opportunity and duty lay in social amelioration, when surely the hope of the world was that . . . the Gospel could still be preached."[1] Here we may see the "idealism" heresy naked and unashamed. The Church is to pursue her task of evangelisation without challenging material conditions which, as every parish priest knows, put all but insuperable barriers in the way of men's acceptance of God's claims. Indeed, to minds like these, the pursuit of holiness seems to be regarded as a sort of obstacle race; and any suggestion to remove some of the obstacles strikes them as not playing the game.

Few of those tormented by "problems of social life" can be helped unless and until they come to view their particular difficulty in its social setting: as a thing which concerns not only themselves but the community. That is the first step: the individual must be brought to realise that the community shares with him, in greater or less degree, the responsibility for the position in which he finds himself. The importance of this may be most easily illustrated in the case of the unemployed man. It is frequently remarked that the worst factor in the life of the man who has been out of work for a considerable time is the sense

[1] *Church Assembly* (*Summer Session* 1936) *Report*, pp. 297 ff.

he gets of not being wanted; of being a mere drag on the community. And it may be doubted whether, in many cases, this sense is greatly mitigated by the provision of "work" under artificial conditions, from which the elements of wages and competition are often excluded, unless at the same time there is the fullest possible recognition of the essential *irrationality* of the contemporary economic and financial situation. In a sane world a great mass of unemployment would be hailed as a triumph, not lamented as a tragedy. A rational society would rejoice, not regret, that its mastery of the forces of nature had become so complete that vast numbers of men and women were freed at last from the necessity of grinding toil. It is useless to pretend that the man whom nobody needs to "employ" is not a liability to a community built upon the foundations of a production-for-profit economy; he *is*. But such a conclusion is the condemnation, not of the unemployed, but of the system to which we as well as they belong. The "burden" of it is, or should be, "intolerable"; but it is a burden and a guilt which all share.

The foregoing considerations are relevant to all those "problems of social life" which confront the individual as the result of the false objectives pursued by society as a whole. It is notorious that men and women in business or commerce frequently find themselves confronted with situations in which two moral rules or principles, each of them binding and valid, are in conflict. We may consider a typical illustration: that of a man faced with the alternative of installing efficient but labour-displacing machinery in his factory, which will throw people out of work, and continuing to supply the public with inefficient goods. "What should 'A' do?"

This is the kind of dilemma in which the rigorist in

ethical theory can give little help. Its extreme difficulty has led some students to conclude that a science of ethics is impossible: "the Golden Rule is that there are no golden rules," and every moral choice must be decided by the common sense or intuition of the individual called upon to make it. But it seems arbitrary to affirm that such choices must be made upon no principles whatever; and the recognition of the need of such principles is the basis of the science of casuistry. There are three rules which the pastor will bear in mind when dealing with "problems of social life" of the type mentioned above.

1. Conscience must be obeyed. It is only when the person concerned is *in real doubt* as to which horn of the dilemma to impale himself upon that "compromise with evil" can be tolerated: if "A" is entirely persuaded in his own mind and heart as to what he "ought" to do, then that is what, at the peril of his soul, and whatever the consequences to others, he must be urged to do.

2. "A lesser duty is annulled by a greater duty."[1] In the case given—assuming, for the sake of argument, that the displaced workmen will not be able to find other employment, and that in consequence their families will suffer—this might be held to involve the abrogation of a duty in which human life was not immediately at stake, in favour of one in which it was. The issue is seldom as simple as that. A clergyman, for example, has promised to speak at a certain meeting on a certain date; as he leaves his house to attend it, a message comes telling him that, if he will go at once to see so-and-so, he will receive a large donation for the missionary work of the Church; is he to break his engagement, or the Church to forego badly needed

[1] W. M. Urban: *Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 253.

funds? The reader will be able without difficulty to think of similar dilemmas illustrating the truth

> "that to the question: What ought I to do in a specific situation? no answer can be given except in such a context."[1]

3. 'A' must be warned of the moral and spiritual risk inevitably attaching to the postponement of a decision. Dr. Kirk points out

> "its tendency to harden imperceptibly into an acceptance of one of the two alternatives between which it was intended to mediate. With any definite act of decision conscience gives up its neutrality, and finds that by secession to the side of one of the contesting claims it has conferred upon it a bloodless victory. . . . A moral issue has been evaded; a judgment of conscience which should have been reached deliberately has gone by default."[2]

Nevertheless,

> "So long as a man thus situated does not become a moral Micawber—complacently accepting the present on the off-chance of a miracle 'turning up' to release him from his dilemma; so long as he is genuinely eager to bring the unhappy state in which he labours to an end; so long as any reasonable hope of averting a catastrophe by honest means remains—so long (provided always that grave injustice is not being done to any particular individual) he should be allowed, and probably even advised, to postpone his final decision."[3]

[1] *Ibid*, p. 250.
[2] *Conscience and Its Problems*, p. 365.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 371.

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